

December, 1853.

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SABBATH MORNING READINGS

ON THE

OLD TESTAMENT.

Book of Exodus.

SABBATH MORNING READINGS

ON THE
OLD TESTAMENT.

BY
THE REV. JOHN CUMMING, D.D., F.R.S.E.,
MINISTER OF THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHURCH, CROWN COURT,
COVENT GARDEN.

Book of Exodus.

LONDON :
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1854.

PREFACE.

THIS Volume consists of expositions of the second book of the Pentateuch—the Book of Exodus. It elucidates customs and explains difficulties, if not with learning, at least with simplicity and clearness. It goes over ground consecrated by stupendous manifestations of the presence and glory of God, and records the sins and sufferings—the waywardness and unbelief—of a people more favoured than any.

But it is not a dry statement of the past. It is full of practical and instructive applications to us, on whom the ends of the age have come. “All these things,” says an Apostle, “happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition.”

The Jew has in reserve for him a yet more majestic Exodus. We, the Gentiles, are now in our desert and accomplishing ours. May we reach the true Canaan, the heavenly rest—the New Jerusalem

As in the Readings on Leviticus, which will follow this Volume, many very deeply interesting rites and ceremonies occur, replete with evangelical truth, for which I cannot find room, I propose, if spared, during 1854, to issue, for those who choose to have it, a small, cheap, occasional volume, to be called "A COMPANION TO THE SABBATH MORNING READINGS ON THE OLD TESTAMENT," which will contain special illustrations of important passages in Leviticus.

May it please God to make these Readings helps to us, to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" his own precious Word.

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THIS is the second book of those five that constitute what is usually called in theological language, the Pentateuch, or the five Books of Moses. The word “Pentateuch” is derived from the Greek, and means five works or compositions. These five are the books that we are now reading, namely, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Exodus is the second. Its name in the Hebrew is not that which we usually give it. You are aware that most ancient books, especially of the date of the books of the Pentateuch, are called after the first words of the book. For instance, the Book of Genesis is called by every Jew to this day, and was called by the Jews previous to the birth of our Lord, Bereshith Bara,—that is, “In the beginning he

created ;” because the first words of the book are Bereshith Barah Elohim, &c. “ In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth ;” and thus, the initial sentence is the technical title of the book. So now, the Book of Exodus begins, “ Now these are the names.” The Hebrew for this is, Weeleh Shemoth, and this book, therefore, which we call “ Exodus,” is called by every Jew, These are the Names. But the name “ Genesis ” was given to the first book by what are called the Septuagint translators, who were accomplished scholars, appointed by Ptolemy about 300 years before Christ, to translate the Old Testament for the use of Hellenistic Jews scattered throughout the whole of Egypt. The name “ Exodus ” denotes “ the going forth,” as “ Genesis ” denotes “ generation,” or “ creation,” and “ Deuteronomy,” “ the other Law,” or the second edition of the Law. The names, therefore, given to the Pentateuch are comparatively modern, that is, they were given about three hundred years before the birth of our Lord ; but they are still retained as being sufficiently expressive of the meaning and the contents of each book.

This book Exodus is a description of the increased multiplication of the children of Israel, of the attempt of the Egyptians to crush them, and of the result of that attempt in their majestic exodus from Egypt to Canaan their promised land.

In the beginning of the book all the different names of the tribes are given ; and it is said, “ All the souls that came from Jacob were seventy souls.” Now, it may give some illustration of the rapid increase of the Israelites, when we state that when they marched out

of Egypt there were 600,000 men capable of bearing arms, besides the accompaniments of women and children. How very sad does that verse read, "And Joseph died, and all his brethren!" All their envies, quarrels, misconceptions, fears, love, all perished in the sepulchre; and their souls emerged from their earthly tenements into the presence of God and of the Lamb. Joseph, the good, noble, and excellent, died. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah died. Their bodies went the way of all the earth, and their souls went the way of all spirits. And so we, too, must die.

We then read that as the children of Israel increased, "there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." The expression, "knew not Joseph," is a Hebrew one, and denotes, "approved not of Joseph." For instance, in the first Psalm we read, "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous;" that is, he approves of it. And again, "The world knoweth us not;" that is, doth not approve of us. And it is not said, "another king," but "a new king," and evidently implies that a new dynasty then took possession of the throne, and exercised jurisdiction over the land of Egypt; and this new dynasty, having received no special blessing from Joseph, was ungrateful for the blessings that he bestowed upon a previous dynasty, and persecuted the descendants of him whom the former kings of Egypt felt it alike their privilege and their duty to patronize and to honour.

Now this new dynasty was evidently afraid of the growth of a powerful people in the midst of them—a sort of *imperium in imperio*; and although, if the

Jews were what they should be, they could have had no evil designs against the reigning power, yet the Egyptians, evil, and ever thinking evil, said, "Come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land." Hypothetical offences have generally been the ground of the persecution of the people of God. It has rarely been for a crime proved, but generally for a crime possible. And this dynasty, in the exercise of what it thought a very far-reaching diplomacy, but really a very wild and foolish hallucination, determined to persecute, and gradually crush, the children of Israel. The result proved that the wisdom of man is folly with God. Whatever is undertaken that has no sanction from God, never will have any real or permanent success before men. All success is temporary and worthless which is not the product of enlightened principle, pure motives, and noble aims and objects. Therefore, whether it be dynasties in power, or rulers in a land, or whatever it be, let us always be sure that we are doing the right thing, in the right way, from right motives and for right ends; and then God, our own God, shall bless us. But attempt anything, however wise it looks, or talented it appears, yet if it be not inspired by principle, it is a rope of sand—it has no cohesion—it must fall to pieces. Let us, therefore, ever feel that we never can do wisely, unless we do well, and that the highest principle is ever the purest and best policy. The dynasty that succeeded the ancient Pharaoh did not know this. They thought they could extirpate

God's people. They might as well have tried to extirpate the sun from the firmament, or the fruits and trees of the earth; for the everlasting arms are around all them that love and fear God; and they are an immortal people who are the sons and daughters of the Most High. The Egyptians found here that the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied. They were like the burning bush, for the more it blazed, the more it shot forth its branches: it was indestructible.

They resolved on a cruel plan, by forcing female loving-kindness into cruelty against the Israelites' very existence, and endeavouring to extirpate them by fraud and the most infamous and profligate means, since they dared not publicly assail and attack them.

In verse 16, the Hebrew word translated "stool," is properly a trough—a vessel of stone for holding water. "See them" is, "see the children," not the mothers; and the real meaning is—When ye see the new-born children laid in vessels of water for the purpose of being washed, ye shall destroy the boys. The midwives did not drown the Hebrew boys: they feared God, and so God honoured them.

But before the Egyptians did this, it is said, "They made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick." Now it has been objected to this, that if the pyramids, as some have supposed, were the production of the children of Israel in their bondage, as they are not built of brick, this statement cannot be correct. But the Pyramid of Fayoum is built of brick; and thus, whilst all the pyramids may not have been the production of the children of Israel,

some of them may have been so. But it is singular that on the Egyptian monuments there have been discovered portraits with peculiar hieroglyphic characters, showing strangers or foreigners, proved to be so because they wore beards, digging clay and making bricks ; and Egyptians, evidently so, because they have no beards, standing over them with rods and whips, lashing them when disobedient; and the impression has been produced by these remains of other days, that they are *bonâ fide* Egyptian records, referring historically to the very fact recorded in the 14th verse, that “they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field.” It is most striking to see how, as antiquity is examined and explored more and more, fresh light is cast upon the sacred page, and new confirmatory proofs of its truth are discovered. It has also been ascertained, although this matter is more disputed, that there are evidences on Egyptian monuments of a new dynasty being introduced into Egypt, just at the very period alluded to in this chapter, when it is said, “There arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.” These are interesting facts ; and it is evident to us that, by-and-by, the infidel and the sceptic will have scarcely a single argument to wield. He has now but very few and very feeble ones ; but he makes the most of what he has ; but as the day advances, as science makes progress, as evidences come round, as discoveries are made, as ancient remains are ransacked, there will grow more and more the irresistible and conclusive proof that this Book is what we Christians, in our hearts and consciences

and firmest reasoning believe it to be — God's inspired and holy Word.

Josephus speaks thus of the period of Jewish history referred to in this chapter:—"Having, in length of time, forgotten the benefits they had received from Joseph, particularly the crown having come unto another family, they became very abusive to the Israelites, and contrived many ways of afflicting them, for they enjoined them to cut a great many channels for the river, and to build walls for their cities. They set them also to build pyramids, and by this means wore them out."

How lowly are the beginnings of the Church of Christ!

How easily does God make the place of the persecution of his sons a nursery of their graces!

The following interesting remarks are, I think, worth extracting, from Dr. Hawk's "Egypt and its Monuments":—

"After the death of Joseph, sixty-five years elapsed before the birth of Moses, according to the chronology of Dr. Hales. The author of the Pentateuch distinctly informs us, that, during this interval, all the sons of Jacob and the men of their generation, had died; and, toward the latter part of the interval above-named, the fact meets us that '*there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.*' This is a particular of Egyptian history, in the explanation of which confusion has arisen, from the fabrication of the pretended Manetho about the leprous Israelites under Moses, and their recall of the shepherd kings, to which we have already adverted. Some

have thought that the monarch of this new dynasty was the first sovereign furnished on the re-intrusion of the pastoral invaders. In opposition to this opinion, we are met by the fact that these shepherds are represented by Manetho (the only authority for the return of the shepherds at all), as coming back on the invitation of the Israelites; the shepherds, therefore, were not likely to become their oppressors. But further, according to Manetho, the Israelites were *not* oppressed during this supposed second period of pastoral sway, but, in conjunction with the shepherds, were themselves the oppressors. The document of Manetho on this subject, therefore, can only be made intelligible by interpreting it to mean exactly the contrary of what it says, and, of course, is not entitled to the least respect as historical authority. We therefore reject as spurious the whole paragraph from Manetho, giving the story of the return of the shepherds on the invitation of 'the lepers.'

"As far as our investigations have enabled us to discover, the eighteenth dynasty of Egypt began to reign about sixty years after Joseph's death, and the first king was *Thothmes*, *Tethmosis* or *Amosis*, or *Ames* or *Amos*, for in all these various modes it has been written. The chronological coincidence would, therefore, suggest that he was the king who 'knew not Joseph.' By this expression we understand, not that he was ignorant of the past history of Joseph, but that he was not so deeply impressed as the last dynasty had been with a sense of the services Joseph had rendered to the state, and therefore not equally disposed to acknowledge the claims of the Israelites upon the Egyptian government. But why was this?

Because he was from the distant province of Thebes, knew nothing personally of the Hebrews, and, with the usual haughty arrogance of Egyptian monarchs, probably viewed them with the contempt and suspicion that attached to foreigners, and, as we have seen, especially to shepherds. Sir Gardner Wilkinson has made a suggestion on this subject, well worthy of consideration. He thinks that the Jews, who had come in under the pressure of a famine, had asked and obtained a grant from the Egyptian authorities, on condition of the performance of certain services by them and their descendants. This is rather corroborated by the fact that some of them were agriculturists, while others were shepherds; for we read that, beside their labour 'in mortar and brick,' they were also employed 'in all manner of service in the field' (Ex. i. 14); and, in Deuteronomy, the phrase occurs, 'Egypt — where thou sowedst thy seed and wateredst it.'

"While the Memphitic dynasty lasted, Wilkinson thinks this grant was respected, and nothing more was required of the Hebrews than a compliance with the terms on which it was made. But when the Theban family came to the throne, the grant was rescinded, and the services notwithstanding required; and thus commenced the bondage, when despotism and prejudice soon found a pretext for imposing additional burdens. It was pretended that the Hebrews, who certainly had rapidly increased in numbers, had thereby become dangerous to Egypt, particularly as they lived on the side next to the Nomade tribes, with whom they might make alliances; and, more especially, as they were not very far distant

from the descendants of the old invaders, the shepherds, who had withdrawn to Palestine only, and there constituted the valiant and powerful race of the Philistines.

“Whether this pretext were well or ill founded, it furnished the Egyptian monarch with sufficient grounds for treating the Israelites like captives taken in war, and compelling them gratuitously to erect ‘treasure cities’ for him, which they did. All we can say of this conjecture, in the absence of positive proof, is that it does not violate probability, and is perfectly consistent with the details of the Bible story.

“The next point that we have to consider, consists of the details of Jewish oppression, at the hands of Egypt:—‘They did set over them taskmasters, to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure-cities, Pithom and Raamses.’—‘And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.’

“I. *They set over them taskmasters.* This is perfectly Egyptian; and exists at this day, with the single difference that the Egyptians occupy the place of the oppressed, instead of the oppressors. The bitter cup is returned to their own lips. A modern writer states, that ‘when the labour of the people is required for any public work, the officers of Mehemet Ali collect the whole neighbourhood—men, women, and children, and, dividing them into so many companies or droves, *appoint taskmasters over them.* These are armed with whips, which they use pretty freely,

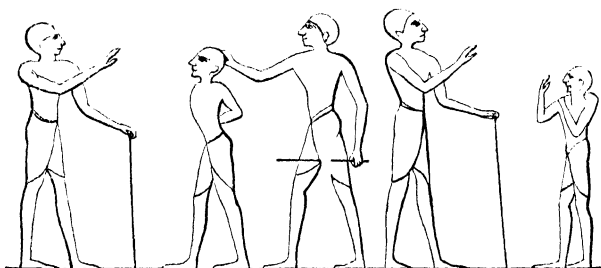
as they are responsible for the completion of the work.' The monuments show that this was precisely the custom of ancient Egypt."

"III. *They were subjected to hard bondage in mortar and brick.* Bricks in Egypt are of great antiquity, and, as we learn from the Scripture story, were usually made with straw, intermixed with clay. Thus writes Wilkinson:—"The use of crude brick, baked in the sun, was universal in Upper and Lower Egypt, both for public and private buildings; and the brick field gave abundant occupation to numerous labourers throughout the country. These simple materials were found to be peculiarly suited to the climate; and the ease, rapidity, and cheapness with which they were made, offered additional recommendations. . . . So great was the demand, that the Egyptian government, observing the profit which would accrue to the revenue from a monopoly of them, undertook to supply the public at a moderate price, thus preventing all unauthorized persons from engaging in their manufacture. And in order more effectually to obtain their end, the seal of the king, or of some privileged person, was stamped upon the bricks at the time they were made." Bricks have been found thus marked, both in public and private buildings."

"As to the use of *straw*, it is proved, by an examination of the bricks brought by Rosellini from Thebes, bearing the stamp of Thothmes IV., the fifth king of the eighteenth dynasty. 'The bricks,' says Rosellini, 'which are now found in Egypt belonging to the same period, always have straw mingled with them, although, in some of those that are most carefully made, it is found in very small quantities.' Another

writer, quoted by Hengstenberg, Prokesch, says, 'The bricks (of the first pyramid at Dashoor) are of fine clay, from the Nile, mingled with chopped straw. This intermixture gives the bricks an astonishing durability.'

"In connection with this subject of brick-making in Egypt, a most interesting painting was found by Rosellini, at Thebes, in the tomb of Roscherê. He did not hesitate to call his comments on it, 'Explanation of a picture, representing the Hebrews as they were engaged in making brick.' We present a copy



EGYPTIAN TASKMASTERS.—FROM THE MONUMENTS.

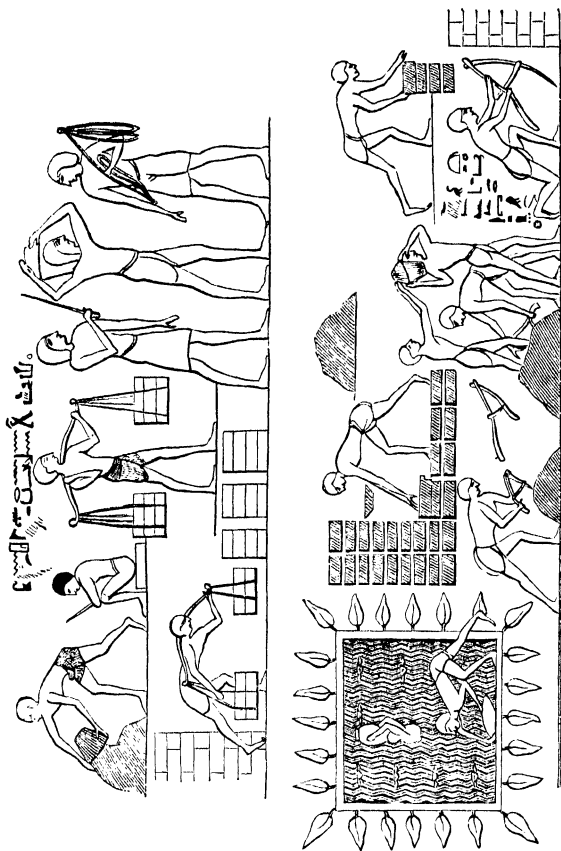
of it, from Wilkinson's drawing, and cannot but consider it one of the most interesting of the pictorial representations yet found in Egypt, even should it be supposed not to represent the Hebrews. Wilkinson's copy is too small to bring out all the details as Rossellini's representation does. We will first give Rossellini's description.

"'Of the labourers,' says he, 'some are employed in transporting the clay in vessels: some in intermingling it with the straw; others are taking the

bricks out of the form, and placing them in rows ; still others, with a piece of wood upon their backs, and ropes on each side, carry away the bricks already burned, or dried. Their dissimilarity to the Egyptians appears at the first view : the complexion, physiognomy, and beard permit us not to be mistaken in supposing them to be Hebrews. They wear at their hips the apron which is common among the Egyptians ; and there is also represented, as in use among them, a kind of short trousers, or drawers. Among the Hebrews, four Egyptians, very distinguishable by their mien, figure, and colour (which is of the usual reddish brown, while the others are of what we call "flesh colour,") are seen. Two of them—one sitting, the other standing—carry sticks in their hands, ready to fall upon two other Egyptians, who are here represented like the Hebrews, one of them carrying upon his shoulders a vessel of clay, and the other returning from the transportation of brick, carrying his empty vessel to get a new load.'

"The diminished size of our representation is necessarily such, that we must request the reader to turn to our cut, while we attempt to supply, by explanation, its deficiencies on a comparison with the much larger picture of Rosellini.

"The three figures, on the right of the upper part of the cut, are all represented by Rosellini with such *wigs* as are usually painted on Egyptians. One of these bears a stick ; and the other two are Egyptian taskmasters, who, by their failure to exact the required amount of work from the Israelites, are compelled to perform servile work themselves, as a punishment. One of them bears a load, and the



BRICK-MAKING IN EGYPT.

The reader will be pleased to suppose the *right* end of the lower cut to be joined to the *left* end of the upper, and he will then have a view of the picture as it is in the original.

other (the right-handed figure, with the yoke) proves that they had not come forth for labour of this kind ; for it will be observed, that he has not yet girt his loins, like all the other labourers seen in the picture, and according to invariable Eastern usage, but wears his dress loose, like the overseer with his stick raised, and the taskmaster who is sitting.

“ The hieroglyphical inscription, at the top of the cut, reads, ‘ Captives, brought by his majesty to build the temple of the great god.’ On the left of the lower cut, is the tank or cistern from which water was obtained, and in which one labourer is seen standing, while another is dipping his vessel into the cistern. *Most* of the labouring figures are represented by Rosellini with *hair* and *beards* ; their *complexion*, also, in the original, is painted of a different colour from that of the Egyptians. There is no doubt they are meant for foreigners of some kind ; and, to our eyes, the physiognomy is unmistakeably Jewish. They are marked also with splashes of clay, and their whole appearance indicates the most servile degradation. *Three* of the labouring figures, however, seem to be Egyptians, and of equal degradation with their companions.

“ It is not surprising that this remarkable picture should have attracted much attention among the students of Egyptian antiquity. Heeren remarks of it, ‘ If this painting represents the servitude of the children of Israel in these labours, it is equally important for exegesis and chronology. For exegesis, because it would be a strong proof of the antiquity of the Mosaic writings, and especially of the Book of Exodus, which, in the first and fifth chapters, gives a descrip-

tion which applies most accurately to this painting, even in unimportant particulars. For chronology, since it belongs to the eighteenth dynasty, under the dominion of Thothmes Mœris, about 1740 B. C., and therefore would give a fixed point both for profane and sacred history.'

"Indeed, the striking character of this painting seems to have caused an intimation, if not a positive expression, of doubt as to its genuineness. The question has been asked, 'Is it not probably a supposititious work, prepared after the Pentateuch was written?' Rosellini first gave it to the world; afterward, Sir Gardner Wilkinson made a new examination of it on the spot, and his acknowledged sound judgment deliberately decided in its favour, as being a genuine production of the eighteenth dynasty. His judgment, it will be seen, is entitled to the more weight when we add, that he is not prepared to say, the picture refers to the work of the Israelites in their bondage; but rather questions it, remarking, however, 'it is curious to discover other foreign captives, occupied in the same manner, overlooked by similar "taskmasters," and performing the very same labours as the Israelites described in the Bible; and no one can look at the paintings of Thebes, representing brickmakers, without a feeling of the highest interest.'"

The intensely interesting nature and illustrative character of these extracts, justify the long quotation I have given.

CHAPTER II.

BIRTH OF MOSES. A MOTHER'S CARE. THE ARK. THE SISTER SENTINEL. PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER FINDS MOSES. HIS MOTHER IS APPOINTED HIS NURSE. HIS SYMPATHY WITH HIS OWN OPPRESSED PEOPLE. HIS INTERFERENCE. THE WELL AT MIDIAN. HIS WEDDING.

You will recollect the statement, recorded in the previous chapter, that a law was passed by the Egyptian tyrant, that every male Hebrew child should be put to death as soon as born, because he feared, or pretended to fear, that, if the Israelites grew up and became numerous, they would depose him, and appoint a monarch, of their own race, to sit upon the Egyptian throne. We now enter on the wondrous biography of an individual, over whom especially were the overshadowing wings of Providence, and in whom were great destinies. He had an important and illustrious part to play in the future history of God's ancient people, in the preparation for the Messiah, and also in the establishment of that Divine economy which made way for, and unbosomed by degrees, the gospel of Christ.

It appears in this record, that, when Moses was born, his mother saw "that he was a goodly child," or, as he is called by Stephen, when remonstrating and reasoning with them who were about to murder

him, "exceeding fair"—*ἦν ἀστέριος τῷ Θεῷ*—that is, "beautiful before God;" and the Apostle Paul, in alluding to the same event in the Epistle to the Hebrews, ascribes the hiding of Moses to faith, and the reason that prompted his mother, Jochebed, to hide him from the assaults of Pharaoh, to some bright signature on the infant's brow. We read in Hebrews xi., "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child," or, as rendered in the Acts of the Apostles, "exceeding fair;" "and they were not afraid of the king's commandment." Now, what this "fairness" can have been, it is impossible, with accuracy, to say. No doubt every mother thinks her own child the fairest; but on this child there was some Divine signature; some aureole around his head; some bright evidence of a destiny before him more than human; and of a relationship that predicted something in his character and history greater than ordinary. And therefore, on this account, as well as from maternal instinct, strong enough in ordinary circumstances, she took him, and resolved to hide him three months. But when the hiding of him longer than three months became impossible—perhaps from the searchers of Pharaoh, or perhaps from the fears she entertained lest some one should inform of the circumstance, she made her election, and chose to trust her dear babe rather to the mercy of the crocodiles, the winds, and the waves, than keep him any longer within reach of the cruel tyrant who then occupied the throne. Mothers of England, how privileged are ye! She therefore, with all the inventiveness of maternal

instinct and love, collected the papyrus, which no doubt was the substance out of which the ark or basket was made, and out of which boats are still constructed on the Nile—and fastened its different parts together with “slime,” or bitumen, and lastly, the outside of it she covered with pitch, to protect it from the ingress of water. She then placed it, not upon the river, where it would be borne with the current to the sea, but among the bulrushes—that is, at some distance from the banks, but not far enough to come within the current, and be carried down with the stream. But not satisfied with these precautions, she resolved to set a sentinel to watch the child, probably to give the alarm should any wild beasts approach, or, still worse, should any persons, searching for male infants, threaten to come near. She therefore placed the sister of Moses (of course the female children were not obnoxious to Pharaoh) “afar off, to wit,” or ascertain, “what would be done to him.” Having thus placed this sentinel, whose guardian care was increased by affection, and whose watchmanship was made more secure by the inspection of the distant eye of the mother herself, both watched through weary days and nights, till, it is said, “The daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river.” This is not the exact description of her purpose. Her object was, to perform some religious rite. The river Nile was the most sacred thing in Egypt; and most of their religious rites and ceremonies were connected with the river and its sacredness. Her “maidens,” or ladies in waiting, “walked along by the river’s side;” the strange object caught her attention; and, when she saw the

ark among the flags, "she sent her maid to fetch it." You can well conceive what was the terror of the sentinel-sister, and, still more, the agitation and alarm of the sentinel-mother. "And when she had opened it, she saw the child; and, behold"—the world would say, accidentally, but a Christian must say, by the good providence of God—"the babe wept." This was a spectacle too touching for Pharaoh's daughter to resist; and, therefore, with true womanly feeling, in language so plain that it indicates the truth of the narrative, "she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children."

Making the best of the emergency, the sentinel-sister, who stood by, ran up to Pharaoh's daughter, and, not telling what was untrue, but not stating, as she was not called upon to state, what was all the fact, she said, "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" As it happens to be a Hebrew child, and of very tender years, you would, no doubt, like a Hebrew nurse for it. Will your royal highness, therefore, trust me to find one for this child, whose beauty so charms you, whom you have picked up accidentally in the river? Well, the thought was so very natural and reasonable, that Pharaoh's daughter said instantly, "Go. And the maid went, and called the child's mother." Here is a specimen of Christian stratagem—that is, stratagem warranted by Christian principles. It was in no respect, that I can see, inconsistent with the sincerity and candour of Christian character. Forthwith the mother came; and Pharaoh's daughter said to her, little suspecting she was

the mother, "Take this child away, and nurse it for me;" and she added, "I will give thee thy wages." The mother could have said, what the safety of the babe prevented her saying, "I want no wages; my reward will be the privilege of nursing this babe;" but, with thorough tact and management, and yet with the propriety and consistency of a Christian, she took the child, and, without a word about the wages, silently and thankfully became its nurse; "and he became," by adoption, as customary in Egypt, the son of Pharaoh's daughter. "And she called his name Moses," from the Hebrew verb *Mashah*, which means to "draw out." The Egyptian lady gave the Hebrew babe a Hebrew name.

"And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown"—according to the statement in the Acts of the Apostles, when he was forty years old—"that he went out unto his brethren." You see where his heart was. He was in a royal palace, where, as an adopted son, he was treated exactly as if he had been one of the king's own children; and yet his heart seems to have grown more and more insensible to the splendour, dignity, and equipage of a palace, and to have had its deepest sympathies with his poor countrymen, groaning under the oppression of Pharaoh. "By faith," says the apostle, "Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter: choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." He would rather be a Christian brickmaker, than an Egyptian prime minister. Such is the force of faith, the victory that overcometh the world.

“He spied an Egyptian,” it is said, “smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren.” That was a command for him instantly to interpose. “And he looked this way and that way”—not as if he knew that he was going to do a bad deed, but, as the original denotes, he hesitated, as if to say, Is this the time for it? “And when he saw that there was no man”—probably to help—“he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.” Now it happens, that, according to Josephus, there was a law in Egypt, that, if two men were seen fighting together in mortal conflict, a spectator might interfere, even though he took away the life of one of them. Moses, therefore, did not do a thing unlawful, according to Egyptian law; but he did a thing unpardonable to Egyptian feelings, and therefore he might expect to suffer for it. Diodorus Siculus states, that the laws of Egypt warranted such a deed.

Well, having thus saved an Israelite from the fangs of a fierce Egyptian, “behold, (what was unseemly enough) two men of the Hebrews strove together; and Moses said to him that did the wrong” (what was a most Christian remark), “Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?” And now see how little encouragement he had to help them who would not help themselves. This Hebrew said to him, who had given up rank, patronage, and power, in order to assist his countrymen, “Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?” Ungrateful answer! If Moses had been a worldly man, he would have said, “I see I get no thanks for doing good; I shall return to the palace, and leave the wretched Hebrews

to work out their own deliverance." But, my dear friends, when we do good, we are not to do it with the prospect of receiving thanks. If you do so, what better are you than the scribes and Pharisees? We are to do good, because it is good, and because it is duty. If the thanks come, we are happy that there are men who are thankful; and if not, we are sorry only for them who cannot be grateful, but our duties are the same. Our obligations remain; our responsibilities are not diminished. All the thanks Moses got from this Hebrew was, "Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?" The Israelites had sunk into brute insensibility under oppression. It is a remarkable fact, we cannot too earnestly reflect on, always and everywhere true, that extreme physical degradation dulls the intellect, and destroys moral sensibility. Some persons complain, that the very poorest classes of the community, who live in underground cellars and upper garrets, are unthankful. But it is because we are undutiful. Physical degradation has a most pernicious effect upon the moral, spiritual, and intellectual feelings of mankind. It brutalizes and barbarizes. I believe that our missions, with all their value—our city missionaries and our scripture readers, doing a most noble work—are here vastly obstructed in their work. I believe a great physical and social amelioration in poor men's homes must be made, before a substantial moral and spiritual one begins in their hearts. We must raise the masses above the level of the brutes, before we can raise them to the level of Christians. You must make them men, before you can make them, by the grace of God, Christians. One rejoices that

there is progress made in this. I think, giving the people the opportunity to have more light, and larger windows, is one of the best approximations to duty that any Chancellor of the Exchequer has yet given us ; and I am perfectly sure of this, that there would be less indulgence in alcoholic drinks, if the poor man had only a more comfortable home to go to. The fact is, he goes to his home, miserable in all respects, unfit, as many of them are, for a human being. He then goes across to the public house, and there he finds a warm fire, a comfortable room, a sanded floor, and people who will converse with him, gas light, and a newspaper. He is led into the public house, not because he loves alcoholic drinks, but because he wants comfort. Let him have these at home. The best teetotal society would be the elevation and improvement of the homes of the poorer classes of our country ; for physical degradation powerfully repels the best efforts to Christianize and instruct.

“ Now, when Pharaoh heard this thing,” we read, “ he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian ”—a country in Arabia Petrea, so called from Abraham’s fourth son, by Keturah—“ and he sat down by a well.” It then appears that the daughters of “ the priest,” or prince, “ of Midian came to draw water.” As you read of Rachel and Rebekah, this was not inconsistent with the dignity of a princess. “ And the shepherds,” or some of the wild tribes of the desert, “ came and drove them away.” One cannot help seeing a contrast here between the conduct of Moses and Jacob. You recollect, that, when the

intended wife of the latter came to the well, he offered all his services, and made himself, in every shape, agreeable to her. But when Moses saw these come to draw water, he did not offer to help them. Evidently Jacob was a specimen of a Christian, refined and cultivated, and anxious to serve and oblige others, as well as to benefit himself; but Moses as evidently was a man who had simply a stern sense of duty, and who felt that he had a mission, which he must embark on, having no taste or time to indulge in expressions of courtesy. Jacob was a patriarchal gentleman; Moses, a man whose heart and thoughts were full of a solemn mission. He did not help them to draw water; but when strangers interfered with them, and attempted to oppose them, he showed, that, if he had not the courtesy of Jacob, he had that sense of duty which would not suffer another to be injured unjustly. This deep sense of duty, this stern solemnity of thought, runs through the life of Moses.

When they came to the prince their father, they told him the story of their protection. The old man said, "And where is he? Why is it that ye have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread," and enjoy the rites of hospitality, and that I may personally thank him for his kindness. Well, Moses went to his home, and enjoyed his hospitality, and was so charmed with Zipporah, his daughter, that he got her in marriage. His courtship, unlike Jacob's, was brief and business-like.

We read then, "It came to pass, in process of time, that the king of Egypt died;" but the children of Israel found no relief; they still "sighed, by

reason of the bondage." But "their cry came up" to the Lord of hosts.

We thus see what small beginnings, if right in their nature, have great ends. That child, in that ark of papyrus, was safer than the bravest crew in the noblest battle-ship that ever sailed the ocean. The overshadowing wings of God were over him; angels ministered unto him. Pharaoh might be swept from his throne, but Moses could not perish in that ark. The cause that has God for its author, and everlasting peace and prosperity for its issue, is a cause which God looks to, and that he himself will ever defend.

There is a special, overruling Providence around the cradles of the babes of England, as truly as around the ark of bulrushes on the Nile.

The duty of those that have the means, is to take the children of those that have none, and nurse and educate them for Christ.

How glorious is the victory of faith! He steps down, without ostentation or parade, from the palace into the brickmaker's field, for Christ's sake.*

* See "Voices of the Dead," p. 175.

CHAPTER III.

THE BURNING BUSH. THE LORD JESUS IN IT. GOD'S SYMPATHY
WITH SUFFERERS. CHARACTER OF PALESTINE. BORROW-
ING JEWELS.

WE have now the first and most impressive manifestation of God to Moses, as a call, and by way of a preface to that wonderful exodus, on the history of which we are now entering. There appears in a bush, that burned and was not consumed, a Being who is here called "the angel of the Lord." I may state, that some of the most competent critics and divines have agreed that this ought to be rendered, "the Angel-Lord." The Hebrew words are *Melech Yehōvah*, which do not mean "the angel of the Lord," but literally, "Jehovah, the sent one." And hence it has been thought that this was a manifestation of our blessed Lord in one of these forms in which he sometimes appeared before his incarnation, and that "the angel of the Lord," wherever He appears throughout the whole of the Old Testament Scripture, was none other than God now manifest in the flesh.

That the Being who appeared on this occasion was God, is obvious ; because, whilst in the second verse it is said, "The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a

bush;" it is declared in the fourth verse, "And when the Lord (Jehovah) saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses; and he said, Here am I. And He said, Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover He said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." It is, therefore, obvious that the being who appeared here was a Divine Being,—the *Melech-Yehovah*, "the Angel-Lord;" and as the father is never spoken of as sent, he is none other than the Angel-God, or God manifest in the flesh, our only Saviour.

The bush that appeared in flames is, literally translated, a thorn-bush, a whin-bush, or a bramble-bush. It is supposed that this mountain, Horeb, is the same as Mount Sinai. The Hebrew for a bramble-bush is *seneh*, and hence it is related by some rabbinical writers, that, after this event, the mountain ceased to be called "Horeb," and was called *Seneh*, "the bramble bush," or "Sinai," which is merely a modification of that word.

He was ordered to take his shoes off his feet, because God was present. The word translated "thy shoes," ought to be rendered "thy sandals" (*sandelok*). Some words seem to have become incorporated into all languages. For instance, the word "wine" is almost the same in every ancient and modern tongue; the same may be said of the word "sack;" and this word "sandal" seems to have come down from the very earliest ages, for the

Hebrew word here translated "thy shoes," is "*sandalok*, being equivalent to our word "sandals."

The bush ever burning and never being consumed, is the recognized symbol of the Church of Christ. It has been for several hundred years the armorial bearing of the Church of Scotland.

To take off the shoe, in the East, is equivalent to taking off the hat in the West, and equally expresses reverence.

God said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people." How interesting is this fact, that God takes cognizance of the afflictions of his people; of one as of many; of great and small! One sometimes is puzzled to determine whether God appears greatest when he rides on the whirlwind and directs the storm, speaks in the thunder, and manifests his glory in the lightning, or when he descends to minister every pulse to the minutest microscopic insect, and to notice the pains, the sorrows, and the sufferings of the humblest and the lowliest of the human family. I have no doubt that God's greatness is more magnificently revealed by the microscope, than it is by the telescope; in creation and in providence in little things, than in great things; and that he appears arrayed in a richer glory when his fatherly hand lays its healing touch upon a broken heart, than when that hand launches the thunderbolt, or gives their commissions to the angels of the sky. God's people could not suffer in the brick-yards of Egypt, without drawing down the sympathies, as they shared in the cognizance, of the Lord God of Abraham. "I have surely seen the affliction of my people."

“And I am come down to deliver them.” All such language applied to God, I need scarcely explain, is borrowed from human habits applied to the Deity. For instance, when it is said that God repented, that does not mean that he changed his mind, but that he changed his mode of proceeding or dealing with mankind. Again, when it is here said, “I am come down,” that does not mean that God was in one place, and change and move from that to another, but that he took notice of, interfered with or interposed, and began a dispensation or a dealing peculiar to the emergency.

Now God said that he would bring them out of Egypt—that was the first promise—and that he would bring them “unto a good land, and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.” It has been a favourite objection with persons of a sceptical turn of mind, how Palestine could be called so; but recent travels in that land have displayed enough of its remaining magnificence and wealth, to show that the strongest expressions of its fertility in ancient times are rather understated than otherwise. The land is described as a land flowing with milk and honey. It has been proved to be a country rich in pasturage and flowers, in flocks and herds, and in large quantities of wild honey. But if this should be thought too severe an interpretation of the words, “milk” may be employed, perhaps, by the sacred writers to denote all kinds of necessary food, and “honey” may include whatever is agreeable and delightful to the palate. The same proverbial expressions are very common in classic writers. Euripides says, “The field flows with milk,

with wine, and with the nectar of bees." We may, from the following passages from the writings of eminent travellers, gather some idea of what Palestine was in a state of great prosperity. "We left the road," says one traveller, "to avoid the Arabs, whom it is always disagreeable to meet with, and reached by a side path the summit of the mountain, where we found a beautiful plain. It must be confessed that if we could live secure in this country, it would be the most agreeable residence in the world, partly on account of the pleasing diversity of mountains and valleys, and partly on account of the salubrious air which we breathe there, and which is at all times filled with balsamic odours from the wild flowers of these valleys and from the aromatic herbs on the hills." Dr. E. D. Clarke, speaking of the appearance of the country between Sychem and Jerusalem, says, "A sight of this territory alone can convey any adequate idea of its surprising produce. It is truly the Eden of the East, rejoicing in the abundance of its wealth. The effect of this upon the people was strikingly portrayed in every countenance. Under a wise and beneficent government the produce of the Holy Land would exceed all calculation. Its perennial harvests, the salubrity of its air, its limpid springs, its rivers, lakes, and matchless plains, its hills and valleys, all these, added to the serenity of the climate, prove this land to be indeed a field which the Lord hath blessed. God hath given it of the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine." Such is its remaining character. And I need not tell you that any land, were it like the garden of Eden, would soon become turned into

a desert, were it treated as Palestine has been. The hoof of the Moslem, the bare foot of the monk, the horse of the Arab and the Bedouin of the desert, all sorts of savages and barbarians, now tread it under foot; and the nations of the earth quarrel on it, and quarrel about it, whose it shall be. I have often told you what I believe is its destiny. The present occupants of Palestine are just like those who are put into an empty house, till it shall be let to the proper tenant. God has placed them there to keep it for the predestined tenants, the royal heritage of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; and soon we shall hear of the march of that people, great in their ruins, discrowned kings, a nation without a home, proceeding to the land of their fathers, and there, where they once shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" not saying, but singing, "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

We read next in this chapter that God told Moses that he would bring him to Pharaoh, and would require him to demand of Pharaoh permission for the people to go forth from the midst of Egypt. Moses naturally felt how unlikely would be his success on such and so solemn an errand: for you will recollect that a new dynasty had now come into Egypt, a dynasty "which knew not Joseph," that is, did not respect the people of God. And Moses felt that nothing would be more difficult than to persuade an Egyptian tyrant that he ought to let go profitable slaves; and he also felt that he was likely to meet with but little success even amid his own people: for he remembered that after he had interposed to

rescue an Israelite from an Egyptian, instead of receiving an expression of courteous gratitude, he was repelled and driven away by two of his own countrymen as a meddler with other people's matters. He therefore naturally asked, "Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" So Paul said, in the prospect of preaching the Gospel, "Who is sufficient for these things?" A truly great mind will always feel most humbled by the prospect of a solemn, an arduous, and an important duty.

God then revealed himself to Moses, and said that the Name he should use, when asked who sent him, was, "I am that I am." See what a magnificent portrait is here! This is God's autograph, God's definition of himself. There is no such definition in the pages of Paganism; no such idea ever entered into the human heart. It is the violation of all grammar; it is evidently language sinking and breaking into pieces under the weight, pressure, and magnificence of a Divine and glorious thought. John in the Apocalypse uses it, "He that was, and is, and shall be," clothing these words in language utterly ungrammatical, but evidently designedly so, in order to embody, as far as possible, a Divine and infinite thought. And I know not a greater proof of the essential Deity of our Blessed Lord, than this. When the Jews were about to stone him, he said, "Before Abraham was," not ἐγὼ ἦν, I was, but "ἐγὼ εἰμι, I am," that is, assuming to himself what every Jew felt was the intransferable Name, Jehovah—"I am hath sent me unto you." It

is not improbable that Jesus alluded to this very definition of essential Deity in this chapter.

The next passage I will notice is the 18th verse, where God tells Moses to say to Pharaoh, "The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us; and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God." Some have said that that was not stating the truth; at least, the whole truth. It is quite true that God meant ultimately to emancipate them; but it is no less true that his first step was only to let them go so far into the desert. The Israelites themselves did not expect they would not return to Egypt. But God told Moses that the king of Egypt would not let them go, until, in consequence of signs and wonders, his fears should prevail over his policy, and he should be compelled to let those go whom he would otherwise retain.

The last verse has been very much misconstrued: "But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment; and ye shall put them upon your sons and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians." Now, it happens that the word here translated "borrow," does not mean strictly that. It is the same word as that rendered "ask," in the 2nd Psalm: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance." It is the word *shaal*, and you will find in the Lexicon of Gesenius, who was not over-prejudiced in favour of the Bible, that it means, "to ask, demand, or insist upon." It is also stated, that God would give them favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they

should give them what they asked. But why should they ask jewels and gold? If a Hindoo goes to his temple, or an Eastern to his mosque, he always arrays himself in his most splendid robes, and puts on his best jewels. This being the universal custom in the East, when the Jews told the Egyptians that they were going to sacrifice to the great God, "I am that I am," they would feel that it was their duty to go with all the signs of dignity and rank, and therefore they gave them what they asked, never expecting back again the "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment." Or, the Israelites might not be sure they were never to return to Egypt, and might ask Egyptian jewels, intending to restore them.

The scene described in this chapter is a meet preface to the events that follow. It was the Divine consecration of Moses; the solemn inauguration of a work, in comparison with which the retreat of the Ten Thousand is trifling, and the Crusades puerile.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MISSION OF MOSES. HIS HESITATION. GOD'S CONDESCENDING ASSURANCE. INSTANCES OF DIVINE POWER. MIRACLES, REAL AND ROMISH. PHARAOH'S HEART.

WE must often be struck, on reading the history of God's dealings with his ancient people, how much obstinacy in the human heart required to be overcome, and what a fearful amount of unbelief needed to be removed, before his most gifted or favoured servants could be induced to undertake the mission that was assigned them. Moses naturally saw that to march the Hebrew Helots from the midst of Egypt across the desert without any visible and proved supply of food, or caravans, or accompaniment of any sort that could be a reasonable presumption to them that they should not perish from hunger by the way-side, would be almost an impossibility; and when God asked him to undertake the mission, his heart fainted, and his strength failed; and he anticipated the evil that did more or less actually occur, "They will not believe me." How will these degraded slaves believe in the possibility of a heavenly maintenance? How will they listen to me, seeing the only experiment I made to do them good was a failure that gave no peace to them, and brought trouble upon my own

head? They will stoutly deny that which I have witnessed—this bright and glorious apocalypse of thyself in the burning bush; and they will tell me, “The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.”

Now what step did God take, not to persuade them, for that was to be a subsequent act, but to persuade Moses to undertake what God commanded? How sad that he should need any additional sign! How sad that he, having seen God, and heard him speak from the bush, should yet doubt that God would give him strength for his journey, and success in the enterprise that he had assigned him! To make sure that any duty you engage in is clearly God's will, and instantly to engage in it in God's strength, is far higher humility than to hesitate for fear that you will fail if you undertake it. God then showed him what he would do for Israel, and how much of his almighty power he would make actual before them, in order to persuade them that Moses had a divine commission. He would convince them by these unequivocal credentials—by these acts full of omnipotence. He said to Moses, “I will give you an instalment and instance of what you shall do. Cast your rod on the ground.” And it became a serpent. “And Moses,” being frightened, “fled from before it.” How true a picture is this of human nature! How like is this to what we should have done in the same circumstances! How much of the angel and the animal are struggling in man! He who inspired this book, and recorded this history, recorded fact, and inspired truth; and what is here written is so true to nature that the story proves its own truth, and He only who made the human

heart could have so delineated its feelings. Moses then took the serpent by the tail, and it became again a rod. This was done to encourage him.

Again, God bade him put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, it "was leprous as snow." That is elliptical language, the meaning of which is, that it became white as snow, which was the colour of the leper. This was to persuade Moses what God would do and could do before the Israelites, in order to persuade them that Moses was sent from God, and their instant exodus their duty.

Now what is the force of a miracle? It does not prove a truth because it is above nature; for I cannot see any reason to doubt that Satan has done and will do miracles. The fallen spirit, it is not improbable, who has superhuman wisdom, may have superhuman power. I do not see why he who is able to reach the human mind and tempt it to evil, may not be able to do things before the human senses more than physical human power can accomplish. But if Satan were to do some superhuman feat, whilst it would so far be miraculous in that it is above what we ordinarily see, it would not prove that Satan was God, or that a lie is truth. The miracles of the New Testament had in them not only superhuman power, but also superhuman benevolence and love, and they indicated that they were from God mainly by that; and, therefore, the miracles of the Bible, or of the New Testament at least, have internal evidence that they are the exponents or expressions of Divine love as well as of Divine power, and therefore from above. Now Satan's miracles, if such there be, or have been, can have no bene-

volence or love in them. His very nature is enmity to all that is good, holy, benevolent, and true; and therefore, his acts, like his inspiration, must partake exactly of the same character.

Now you are aware that a great dispute has been awakened in the present day, chiefly by Romanists, about miracles. Dr. Newman says that miraculous power is in his church; that he has seen, or can prove, miracles done there; that they are frequent as showers in April, and that the whole of that church is just one mighty sea of miracles upon miracles like wave after wave appearing every day. True, he quotes very grotesque ones; true, one is sometimes provoked to smile when one reads the specimens that he gives; but a very simple way of ending all our scepticism about the miracles in his church would be, not to perform them in nooks and corners, to which that distinguished Oratorian may have admission, but to perform them in Cheapside, in the Strand, upon the highways, and let heretical eyes see them as well as the orthodox; because, if a miracle be an appeal to the senses, and if the heretical be not deprived of the use of their senses, they could judge of the miracles as well as the orthodox. Any one who had eyes could see that the serpent was turned into the rod, and the rod again into the serpent. Moses did not doubt this; he could not. Therefore, if there be miracles performed in the Church of Rome, the way to prove them is, not to deliver splendid lectures in the Oratory, showing they were and are, but to do them, and then we shall be able to judge whether they be from above, or from beneath, or whether they be shams and pretences, and the merest

mimicry of miracles, as some of them unquestionably are. But it is fair to say, that I do not believe all the so-called miracles of the Church of Rome to have been shams or deceptions. I said that Satan had superhuman power, and I am not sure that real superhuman deeds have not been done by him in the Church of Rome. I think that that church is just the correlative of the Church of Christ. In fact, there are but two superhuman elements or forces upon earth; these are, "The mystery of iniquity," and "The mystery of godliness." The great error of Protestants is, that they think that the Church of Rome has very little to say for itself. It is the most magnificent though most wicked conception that ever appeared on earth, except the only divine one, and, except that, the most magnificent idea that ever was submitted or embodied on earth to man. Satan is no blunderer. It combines the archangel's power with all the fiend's depravity. It is the mystery of iniquity, the opposite of the mystery of godliness.

And into one or other of these two great systems every man is going. Each is assuming, in this day, his polarity; and that polarity will lead him either to antichrist with them that are his, *i.e.*, the apostasy; or to Christ with them that are his, *i.e.*, the Church of the living God. But were the distinguished Oratorian, to whom I have alluded — distinguished for his great genius and powerful intellect—and, alas, for his eccentric course—to perform a miracle himself, that would not convince me that Bonaventure's Psalter is the inspiration of God, or that the Virgin Mary is to be worshipped. No amount of miracles that could be done before me, under heaven, would

convince me that one syllable of the Bible is false ; because, if Omnipotence became the pedestal 1800 years ago, on which the truths of the New Testament were set forth, Omnipotence cannot be the pedestal in 1853, on which the lies of Satan, or the errors of the world, are exhibited. God cannot contradict himself. If, therefore, the most gifted emissary of the communion I have alluded to were to come, and raise a dead man from the grave, my first remark would be : “ I admit the miracle, but what do you mean to prove by it ? ” Every miracle in the New Testament was, not a freak of power to display omnipotence, but a pedestal to set forth a truth. He would answer, that it was to prove that the mass is right ; that the Virgin Mary is to be worshipped ; and that tradition is as good as Scripture. What would be my reply, and that of every Protestant ? First, I would recollect that in the last days, it is said, “ there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders ; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” I should recollect, again, that it is said, “ Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.” I should recollect also, that it is said, that his coming, who “ sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God,” is “ after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders—*τέρασι ψεύδους*, that is, “ wonders to demonstrate a lie.” I should recollect, again, that St. Paul says, “ Though we ” (apostles) “ or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” And then I should turn round to the miracle-worker, in this

way, and say, "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, (and not the Virgin Mary,) and him only shalt thou serve." In this chapter, we have real and unequivocal miracles, of which the human senses were the admitted and competent judges. A miracle, to be of use, must not be done in a corner.

Moses, we read, hesitated still to go, until Aaron was appointed to go with him, as having special qualifications. Moses reluctantly consented.

Afterwards Moses said to Jethro, or Reuel, with that deference to the old man's wishes which is ever due to age, "Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro," either because he had confidence in Moses, or under special inspiration so to decide, "said to Moses, Go in peace. And the Lord said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life." Forty years had elapsed since he slew the Egyptian.

God gives Moses his message in verses 21-23. "And the Lord said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart that he shall not let the people go. And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born: and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn."

Then there is a passage here which we shall have the opportunity of considering largely in subsequent

chapters : " I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall not let the people go." The answer to any objections to this statement, which I give in the mean time, is, that in subsequent chapters, it is said that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. You must not, therefore, take a profile view of any one truth, and look only at the side that suits you, but you must look at both sides. If it is said in one passage that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, it is said in another passage that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. There must, therefore, be some intermediate explanation that will reconcile both. That explanation is plainly this, that some things God does directly, and is the cause of ; that other things God does indirectly, and is the occasion of. For instance, Jesus came to preach peace ; and yet he himself says, " I came not to send peace, but a sword." Now, there can be no doubt that the direct object of the mission of Christ was not to create war, but peace. What he meant, therefore, was, that his mission to create peace would be the occasion of war. Again, salvation is said by the apostle to be to one " the savour of death," and to another " the savour of life ; " that is, the savour of death incidentally,—the savour of life directly. So, God hardened Pharaoh's heart by submitting to him those truths, arguments, and evidences, which he ought to have accepted, but the rejection of which recoiled upon himself, and hardened the heart they did not convince. Everybody knows, in the present day, that if you listen, Sunday after Sunday, to great truths, and, Sunday after Sunday, reject them, you grow in your capacity of repulsion and ability to reject them, and the more hardened you become ; and

thus, the preaching of the Gospel that was meant to melt, will be the occasion of hardening your heart—not because God hates you, but because you reject the Gospel. The sun itself melts some substances, whilst, from the nature of the substances, it hardens others. You must not think that God stands in the way of your salvation. There is nothing between the greatest sinner and instant salvation, but his own unwillingness to lean on the Saviour, and be saved. Moses evidently had the working hand, and Aaron the eloquent tongue.

Verse 24. Moses had incurred the anger of God by delaying to undergo the initiatory rite of circumcision. Though it seems contrary to our feelings, the mother, under a special inspiration, performed hurriedly the rite or sacrament. A mother of old, called a son being circumcised, a spouse or husband.

CHAPTER V.

SECURITY OF PHARAOH. INTERVIEW OF MOSES AND AARON WITH PHARAOH. ROYAL DISCOURTESY. MILDNESS OF MOSES AND AARON. ROYAL TYRANNY. SEVERITY OF LABOUR. DISAPPOINTMENT OF MOSES.

WE learn from the chapter we have read, that Pharaoh, the Egyptian king, sat upon his throne in possession of all the pomp and magnificence of an eastern despot, fearing no rival, and expecting no reversal. He had not the remotest idea of that great transaction that was taking place, invisible to him, between Moses, Aaron, and the Lord God of Israel, the issue of which would be his own dethronement, the destruction of his nation, and the deliverance of those very slaves whom he was grinding to the earth by oppressive tyranny and avaricious despotism. He recollected Moses, no doubt, and the very wonderful story of his early life. He had heard that he was picked up as a foundling; that he was taken home by a royal daughter of an illustrious predecessor of his own; that he was brought up in the palace, and learned there all the wisdom of the Egyptians; but that he was so foolish and headstrong a fanatic, that he had left the advantages that he had, and the splendid preferment that he enjoyed, for what Pharaoh thought a mere delusion,

an idea, or sentiment,—of no weight or worth when weighed against the actual advantages of a great kingdom, a splendid palace, and the power that he might wield as the chief servant of Pharaoh. He thought that this fanatic, though not dead, was too feeble and worthless a personage, and too much carried away by his own romantic notions of religion, to at all weaken his sway over the Egyptian people.

It appears, however, that while these thoughts may have been passing through his mind, Moses and Aaron went into the palace, and spake to Pharaoh, and said, “Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.” What a majestic preface to this humble, reasonable, and fair petition ! “The God of Israel is our authority ; we are simply his ambassadors, and we ask for him, and in his name, a boon that will not materially inconvenience you, and that will very materially bless our countrymen, and oblige us,—that thou wouldest let the people of Israel go. We do not ask their exodus, we simply beg a respite. We do not demand their eventual escape, we simply ask that they may have a holiday, in order that they may be able to go into the desert so far as to sacrifice unto the God of Israel.” It may be said, that Moses ultimately contemplated more. So he did. But if Pharaoh refused the little that he asked, he would have refused more violently all, if he had ventured to ask all. Moses asked in righteous principle, and yet with wise policy. He asked an instalment of the whole ; and, if he could not obtain that instalment, he knew that

he was far less likely to get the whole. Therefore, he was satisfied to ask a portion, and see what the result would be.

Now, Pharaoh's reply was neither dignified, nor courteous: "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." He might have, in words at least, respected the religion of the people, even if he did not believe it. We ought to respect every man's faith, whatever it be; for it is his all. We will try to undeceive him, if he be wrong; but the way to do so is not to pour contumely upon him, or insult upon the religion that he holds; but by showing him, in contrast with it, the truth in love, and so persuade him to renounce his errors, and embrace what he was ignorant of, the more excellent way. But Pharaoh, with all the despotism of an eastern prince, exclaimed, "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." He gave an absolute refusal, without the courtesy, or even the dignity which became so great a monarch, to those who approached him in the language of supplication, and asked what was neither unreasonable nor unfair. In all probability Pharaoh judged of the God of the Israelites by the Israelites themselves, as some do of the poor man's Lord by the poor man's state. They were degraded slaves, and must, therefore, have a feeble God. He thought there could be no moral grandeur, unless there were material circumstance. He fancied that such degraded Helots could not have a God of great power, or at least, worthy of his confidence, or his respect. Now, how did Moses and Aaron reply? Just mark the contrast between the Egyptian

king, and the Hebrew or Christian messengers. Being threatened, they threatened not; reviled, they reviled not again. They took meekly his remarks; they entreated, but threatened not; for they said immediately, "The God of the Hebrews hath met with us;" speaking calmly, as if not one insulting expression had been used: "let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword." Let us do the duty that he enjoins, lest we suffer the consequences of neglecting that duty. Now, here is a precedent for us. If Pharaoh forgot his place, Moses and Aaron were not to forget theirs. If he laid aside the dignity of a king when he addressed them, evidently in loss of temper, as well as in irreligious language, they did not lay aside the deference that subjects owed, or the meekness that Christians felt. They spoke as if he excusably mistook their object, or was ignorant of their meaning, owing to their imperfect expression of it. They explained, that they only wanted to go, that they might escape the righteous judgment which disobedience would incur. And they might have said, "If judgment begin at the house of God, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel?" It ought to have suggested to Pharaoh, If God's own people suffer for disobedience to his laws, what will be the treatment to be expected by those who insult him to his face, and blaspheme the holy Name by which they are called?

The king of Egypt was not moved, but said, "Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works?" The word "let" is used in the

old Saxon sense or meaning of the expression, and is equivalent to "prevent;" "Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, prevent the people from doing their works? Get you unto your burdens. And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens." He turned aside with perfect contempt from Moses and Aaron, and spake to the officers and exactors, and told them to see that the people instantly attended to their work. The expression, "the people of the land now are many," evidently denotes that the produce of so many labourers' work was a very great accession to the royal treasury; and that if he were to allow them to suspend their work for a very few days, it would be the loss to him of a very great sum. He thought only of two things—filling the coffers of the state by grinding down the lives of his slaves; and of degrading a people, who he dreamed, in his folly, if they had strength and opportunity, would rise up, resist his government, and upset his throne. He therefore said, "They are many," and insisted upon their going back to their burdens; and, very much like the eastern princes still, instead of being softened by this appeal to his royal clemency, he seems to have been more exasperated against them; for he now refused them straw, and yet insisted upon their producing in the same time the ordinary number, or "tale" of bricks.

In the pyramid of Fayoum there are found bricks which have been hardened in the sun containing short particles of chopped straw mixed with the clay, their just idea being that straw would give cohesion to the mass, the brick not being submitted to the

action of fire, but only to the heat of the sun. Whilst these bricks would not be suitable for our buildings, you can see their appropriateness in Egypt, where there is no rain. In a dry and sunny clime the bricks would last for thousands of years, whereas in our climate they would be of no use. In others of the pyramids bricks are found which have been subjected to the action of fire; and this has led some to think that the straw was used in the furnaces.

Dr. Shaw, speaking of the bricks found in one of the Egyptian pyramids, remarks, "The composition is only a mixture of clay, mud, and straw, slightly blended and kneaded together." In Cairo in Egypt a traveller remarks, "The houses for the most part are of brick mixed with straw to keep them firm."

There is at the same time abundant evidence, that bricks were also hardened or burned in the fire. But whichever it was, you can see the hardship suffered by the Israelites on this occasion; because they were required to produce the same amount of bricks in the same time, and yet they had to go and collect the straw or the stubble for these bricks, in order to satisfy the demands of the monarch. It was therefore additional labour in the same time, without the opportunity and means of accomplishing it.

But the officers, when they saw it, came and complained. Some think that while the taskmasters were Egyptians, the subordinate officers were Hebrews. These last came and complained, "Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and, behold, thy servants are beaten, but the

fault is in thine own people." In the East it is still quite common to beat officers of some rank for their misdemeanours, and it is not regarded as in any degree sinful.

As they came forth from Pharaoh, they met Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "The Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh." You came professedly to do us good; you have done us harm. You have not helped one jot our deliverance, but you have added immensely to the weight and pressure of our burdens. The Lord therefore forgive you. We deeply lament it; but so it is. Often oppression becomes heaviest as deliverance draws near.

"And Moses," grieved and pained, "returned unto the Lord, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people?" He thought God had resolved to disappoint him, since their burdens, instead of being mitigated by his interposition, had been all the opposite way. Moses saw but the preface, and rashly judged of the work. He saw the beginning, and knew not the end: what God did he knew not then, but he lived to know thereafter.

The language in this twenty-second verse is very remarkable, and explains other passages of Scripture. Moses said, "Lord, wherefore hast thou evil entreated this people?" But it was the taskmasters who evil entreated them, not God. And this explains that passage to which I referred last Lord's day morning about God hardening Pharaoh's heart. In the Hebrew idiom, God is often said to do a thing which he is only the occasion of being done. It is said, for instance, that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's

heart; that is, he applied those means that if not successful in subduing that heart, would necessarily by their reaction eventuate in the hardening of that heart. So here, God did not evil entreat the people; but he used those means to effectuate their exodus, which at first added to the weight and pressure of their burdens. Thus, God is said to do a thing, which he was only the occasion for a moment of being done. Again, one of the petitions in the Lord's Prayer is, "Lead us not into temptation." This does not mean that God ever leads his people into circumstances of sinful temptation; the meaning clearly is, "Suffer us not to be led into temptation." So here the idea is, "Wherefore hast thou *suffered* us to be evil entreated?" And again, "The Lord *suffered* Pharaoh's heart to be hardened;" the Hebrew idiom often ascribing to God the doing of a thing, of which he is only the occasion, by the instrumentality he employs for effectuating great and permanent good.

God may be working gloriously for our land, when all seems to be against it. Let us not judge by feeble sense. Let us trust.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DIVISION OF THE BIBLE INTO CHAPTERS. THE DOUBTS AND
FEARS OF MOSES. GOD'S CONDESCENDING LOVE. JEHOVAH.
GOD'S COVENANT. MOSES STILL DOUBTS.

THE first verse of the chapter I have read is plainly a reply to the last verse of the previous one. This leads me to repeat what I have mentioned before in the course of my expositions of the chapters, that our division of the Bible into chapters was done by a very awkward printer, when the earliest printed impressions of the Bible were produced, and therefore that some of the divisions, as might be expected, are extremely unhappy and undesirable. It is plain that a great portion of this sixth chapter ought to be attached to the fifth.

Moses had made the objection at the close of the previous chapter, "Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all;" that is, "I totally despair of the fulfilment of thy promise, or of the success of thy power; for the experiment I have made has been so signal a failure, that I cannot be induced to make a second." Well, God's reply, in-

dicating forbearing and bearing with a servant doubting where he ought to have had perfect confidence, was this, "You are mistaken, Moses. The failure of a first experiment—if failure you choose to call it—is no proof that a second experiment will not succeed. At all events, it is your duty to follow out what your God says: it is my glory to see that what I have promised and predicted will come to pass." We are all apt in all things to intrude on God's province, thus losing force, instead of concentrating all our disposable energy within the province that God has assigned us. It is not ours to question for a moment that God will fulfil his promises; it is ours always and everywhere to fulfil the obligations that he has laid upon us. God says, that, so far from Pharaoh succeeding, he will be glad to let these poor brickmakers and slaves go forth from his land. There is something very encouraging in this; that God, instead of rebuking strongly the unbelief of his servants, gives another manifestation of his greatness to their senses, in order to overcome by love, instead of repressing by rebuke, their unbelief and suspicions. Therefore, God here says to Moses, "I will turn over another leaf in my character; I will unveil another ray of my glory. You have known me, Moses, as the *El Shaddai*," that is God Almighty, "but I wish you now to know me in a higher relationship, and by a name expressive of a yet greater character and glory; that is, the name Jehovah."

El Shaddai means God Almighty; but Jehovah means He that was, and is, and is to be. You will find that the name *El Shaddai*, God Almighty, is generally used when God speaks of what he can do; and

that Jehovah is used always with reference to the accomplishment of what God had promised, and predicted that he would do. The name Jehovah is applied to our blessed Redeemer in the Book of Revelation : "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." These words are a paraphrase upon the name Jehovah. And this name Jehovah, I may mention, is still held to be so sacred by a Jew, that he never mentions it. Wherever the word Jehovah occurs in the Old Testament, he substitutes *El Shaddai*, *Elohim*, or *Adonai*, that is, "the Lord," instead of it. And if he should find a fragment of paper with the name "Jehovah" upon it, he would lay it aside, as too sacred to be profaned, containing as it does the incommunicable name of God.

Here the question occurs, Was not this name known to Moses? There are two classes of commentators on this very text. Some say that the name Jehovah was not known prior to the appearance of God in the burning bush. You answer that statement by referring to the vision that Abraham saw—the ram caught in the thicket, when he called the place *Jehovah-jireh*, "The Lord will provide," or, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." Well, then, if Abraham used the very name Jehovah, and if the word Jehovah occurs several times besides in the course of the previous chapters, how can it be said that this name was not known to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob? Those who hold the opinion that it was not literally known to them, say that, as Moses did not write Genesis till some 2000 years after some of the facts recorded in it, he used the name Jehovah because it was known to the Jews at the

time he wrote, though it was not known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the years in which they lived. But this would seem to be irreconcilable with some passages where the name Jehovah must have been used, because it was given with reference to special circumstances, to which the other names of God would not seem to be applicable. And besides, it would seem on this supposition, that Moses did not write strictly and literally what was true, but wrote the past with a borrowed light from the present, which would not be the duty of a faithful historian. The other opinion—and I think it is the just and the only interpretation—is, that the name Jehovah was known to Abraham; but that its pregnant meaning, preciousness in its application, and comfort, was so little known, that, in comparison, it was not known at all; that is, God had not manifested all his glory as Jehovah to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as he would do to Moses and to the children of Israel in after generations. This seems to be the natural and fair interpretation of the passage, “By my name Jehovah was I not known to them;” that is, in all its fulness, emphasis, and precious significance. But now it will be known to you by being more fully and gloriously revealed and realized.

Then God repeats to Moses his promise, “I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan.” “Why should you doubt, Moses? This is an absolute fixture; it must be. Go, therefore, and in the confidence that that will be, take the place, and discharge the duties that I have assigned unto thee. Say to the children of Israel, I am Jehovah. That is the name that I shall

be known by. He who can make something out of nothing ; He who not only has all power, but creative power. And I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And tell them that I will bring them into the land which I promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; and I will give it you for an heritage ; for the reason of it is, not your merit, nor their excellence, but my own sovereignty. I am Jehovah, and that is the only reason of it."

"Moses spake so unto the children of Israel ;"—he took heart to engage in his mission again : "but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage." They had become degraded, depressed, debased ; and we know that deep physical degradation makes men insensible to moral opinions.

Moses then "spake before the Lord, saying, Behold, the children of Israel hearkened not unto me ; how, then, shall Pharaoh hear me ?" "If they who have the deepest interest in the message have turned a deaf ear to it, how can I expect that Pharaoh, who has no interest in it, but the very reverse, will listen to it?"—the unbelief of Moses breaking out in almost every expression that he uttered.

But "the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron," taking no notice of their objection, "and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt."

In conclusion there is given an account of the families of the tribes of Joseph and of Jacob ; and, singular enough, Moses takes scarcely any notice of his own family connections, but refers especially to Aaron,

indicating that forbearance, and that "in honour preferring one another," which are so characteristic of the penmen of Sacred Writ. We have in the list of the progenitors of these men, persons of questionable character and conduct, which is evidence that Moses and Aaron based their opinions, not upon their descent, but upon the commission of Jehovah, who sent them.

The expression, "father's sister," used in one verse, does not not always denote a sister in the literal sense of blood relationship; it is often used to denote a distant relationship, a kinswoman; and it may be thus used here.

In the closing verse we find that Moses' unbelief was not overcome; for he said, "Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips;" evidently giving up all in despair. "I will go because thou commandest; but I go with a heavy heart, and a reluctant step." So difficult is it to overcome that evil heart of unbelief, that leads us to depart from the living God. So natural is it to suspect where we ought to confide; to despair where we ought to hope; and even when God calls, to prefer our own prejudices and prepossessions to his blessed Word.

THE KING THAT KNEW NOT JOSEPH ;

OR, THE CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD.

“ Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.”—Exodus i. 8.

I HAVE explained the first six chapters in the course of our Sunday morning Expositions, or rather given such an outline of them as could be submitted in the little space of time assigned for that purpose ; but the verse I have read seems to suggest a thought not unworthy of special analysis. It explains the severity of Israel's sufferings in Egypt. It sums up the reasons of the unprecedented persecution endured from a dynasty, or a king, “ which knew not Joseph.” It reveals the reasons why one so distinguished for his piety, his sagacity, political prudence, and moral worth, together with his people, should have been so depreciated, despised, and evil entreated by any king of Egypt acquainted with the years, and the peculiarities of the years, that were coeval with Joseph. No doubt there was a reason, and this would seem to be, that the kings of Egypt had degenerated in their moral character, and therefore they elevated to position, place, and power, men far different in tone and temper of mind and heart from the good and great patriarch Joseph. It is said, the first dynasty recog-

nized in Joseph a distinguished patriot, an accomplished statesman ; the second dynasty swept away Joseph and his cabinet together, and elected for a corrupted court a more corrupt and immoral ministry. The consequence was, that Joseph, whose deeds in the past were so loudly and so emphatically appreciated, was laid aside, despised, forgotten—his advice unsought, and his contributions to the well-being of his country at a former day despised or at least passed by. But the Christian patriarch was, no doubt, preserved in the obscurity of private life with as equable and magnanimous a mind as that with which he was gifted when he trod the high and perilous places of the land. He had that heart which beat true to God in the palace of Pharaoh, and would not cease to beat equally true when the new king came “which knew not Joseph.” Did the benefactors of the world confer benefits for the sake of being thanked for them, they would cease in numerous instances to be benefactors at all. We must confer good upon those who need it, and do service to those whom that service will benefit, not in expectation of reward on earth, but because duty prompts us upon the one hand, and religion consecrates that sense of duty, making it felt more obligatory upon that account, on the other.

It is said, Joseph was not “known” by this dynasty. This is a strong expression, used to denote the perfect obscurity into which this good and great man had fallen ; or rather, the contempt in which this benefactor and true patriot was held by those who were unable to appreciate him. It was not that Joseph’s character had waned in beauty ; it was not that his intellect had lost its sagacity ; it was not that he was

less capable of holding the helm of the State, and doing the duties of a statesman, under the new dynasty, than he was under the old; but the new dynasty wished to pursue a course of action and conduct inconsistent with that purity, integrity and candour, which Joseph had counselled, and which by reason of his previous recommendation was exhibited by a former dynasty; and therefore he was cast off. Less worthy men were taken in his place. But, what occurred to Joseph is just what befalls Christians still, in proportion as their Christianity ceases to be latent. We are told by an apostle, that the world knoweth us not, because it knew Christ not. If this be a universal law, Joseph must have come under it in the patriarchal days just as much as the apostles came under it in the early dawn of the Christian dispensation. If it be a fact universally true in this dispensation, we must expect, in proportion as we exhibit ourselves as Christians, to come under its action also. In what respect, then, can it be said that they did not know Joseph in the days of that new Egyptian dynasty, or that the world, of which that dynasty was the type, does not know Christians still? "The world knoweth us not because it knew Him not." The reason is just this. The world has an eye that can appreciate and take in outward and worldly greatness, beauty, rank, pomp, splendour, but it wants the inner eye to appreciate that which will outlast it all,—inward, moral and spiritual character. The world, like the dynasty of Egypt, can understand perfectly well external rank, and visible dignity; but it cannot appreciate that rank that relates to God, and that dignity with which

they are invested who are by adoption made the sons of God. The world can understand the wise after the flesh, but not the truly wise. It can understand the rich after the manner and standard of this world, but not the rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom. It can see that common beauty, which the vulgar eye can admire; but it cannot appreciate, because it cannot see, that inner, spiritual beauty, which is the clothing of the King's daughter, and which is visible only to that new sense which the Holy Spirit implants in them who are born again, who alone are able to distinguish between the inner, moral grandeur which has no decay, and the outer, material pomp and splendour which, like a vision, will vanish, and scarcely leave a wreck behind.

The reason why the world does not appreciate the Christian character is, that the Christian lives a higher life. He walks, if we may so speak, on a loftier level. He is, in proportion as he is a Christian, influenced by motives and hopes, and guided by laws, and a sense of a presence, which an unconverted, worldly man, such as was the new king of Egypt who knew not Joseph, cannot at all understand. A thorough worldly man would be amazed at hearing that a person had made great sacrifices of certain profit to that airy and transcendental thing, as he would call it, Christian principle; and he would wonder how any man could be so destitute of common sense, as to give up £500 a year in deference to that thing called "conscience," or to that book called "the Bible;" or in deference to the antiquated notion somehow got into his head, "Thou, God, seest me." A man who is thoroughly of the world,

thoroughly in it, with no appreciation of what constitutes true beauty, and true excellence, and is in fact the Christian character, will wonder and marvel how any man will give up a certain positive good that can be held by the hand, in deference to any airy principle, to conscience, or to religion, that cannot be weighed in scales, nor meted by a yard measure, nor touched and handled. Therefore, he thinks, there ought to give way—principle to profit,—never, never profit to principle. Joseph probably was called by this dynasty, and asked, “Shall the king go to war with this nation?” Joseph would naturally answer, “What has the nation done?” The answer probably would be, “Nothing.” “Then, why go to war?” “In order to add to Egypt another province.” Joseph would then say, “That is aggressive warfare, and therefore wrong-doing.” “But why,” they would say, “do you call it so?” “Because,” would be his answer, “God has taught me so; because I know from a higher teaching, what you must feel in your consciences, if you have any of the remains of its original light, that aggressive war for the aggrandisement of a nation, disguise it as you like, belongs to the same category as the midnight burglar, or as the person who breaks into a house, in order to add to his own pomp and equipage.” The king would then answer, “You are not the pliable minister who is wanted in these days of Egypt. You must retire, and a more manageable character must take your place:” and therefore the king “knew not Joseph.”

Another reason why the world does not appreciate the Christian now is, that it judges a Christian by itself, and thinks that he must be at heart,

notwithstanding all his pretences, what it is. The world loves sin, delights in it. Covetousness, malice, hatred, ambition, thirst for power, are all passions that are not only cherished but nourished in the worldly man's heart. We do not say all these passions are in one heart, but one or other of them is in every worldly man's heart. And when the world meets with a man who professes to have laid his ambition at the foot of the cross, and whose thirst for power is the noble thirst of doing good, it will say, "This sounds very fine, but we do not believe it. The only difference between you and us is, that we do not pretend to these things, and that you do; for behind the curtain you practise what we practise, and are exactly what we are." Therefore, the world hates the Christian, not simply for his Christianity, but because it cannot conceive such a man to be any other than a thorough hypocrite. Hence the world does not know, does not like, does not approve, in fact, condemns the Christian, and believes that he accommodates himself simply to the outward eye, but that at heart and in reality he is just as other men are. Now this is not the fact. If a man be a Christian, he has got a new taste, new sympathies and hopes; he has got a new standard of action, a new object dangling before him in the distance, towards which he runs, and after which he aspires; he lives a higher life, breathes a purer air, and is altogether what the apostle calls "a new man." Therefore, the world, judging that he is what it is, only with the added sin of hypocrisy, does not know that if he be a Christian at all, it is as natural to him to love the right, as it is natural to the world to pre-

fer the wrong; and that his change of character generates a change of taste, which makes him hate what once he loved, and love what once he hated.

The world, or the unregenerated man, for that is the definition of it, cannot understand either the sorrows or the joys of a Christian. It can understand sorrow at being balked of a great prize, or under bitter disappointment at not attaining an expected fortune; the world can thoroughly understand the pain of being outshone by a rival, or eclipsed by another candidate for greatness; but it cannot understand sorrow at having done wrong, or grief that the world is as it is, or pain that men should not be what the Gospel prescribes they ought to be. The world cannot understand that; it cannot take such elements into its calculation at all. Therefore such a sorrow is hidden from the world, and as truly inappreciable by it, as if it were non-existent altogether.

A Christian's joys the world cannot understand. A Christian's joy is derived from hearing that the cause of truth and righteousness makes way, that the cause and kingdom of Satan are depressed, that the kingdoms of this world are more and more becoming the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ, that the Bible is more read, and circulated more extensively, that error is being rooted out, that truth is prevailing over the earth. These are elements in a Christian's joy. But the world cannot understand it. It cannot see the least use in spreading Bibles, except more employment for the paper manufacturer and the bookbinder. It cannot understand the good

of Christianity, except that it takes civilization in its train. And therefore, a Christian's joys are such as a mere worldly man cannot sympathize with; they are as much unknown to him, as if they did not exist, or were not felt at all.

But this expression, "knew not," means more than, not appreciate; it means also, not approve, or, disapprove. When it says, therefore, that "there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph," it implies that this king positively disapproved of Joseph, as well as disliked, slighted, or left him out. It is still the character of the world, that it disapproves of Christians. It disapproves of their separating from what it upholds; it disapproves of their protesting against what it applauds; it disapproves of them, because they run not to the same excess of riot, and because they at times feel it their duty to express their disapprobation of that of which the world is most enthusiastically enamoured. Thus, the world disapproves of Christians. Only let us take care that its disapproval be of our Christian character, and not of our frail prejudices that accompany it, or of infirmities that are scarcely separable from it, or of our imprudent or injudicious conduct. Christians are apt to confound the world's disapproval of their injudiciousness with its not knowing the Christian character. There are many infirm Christians, and many Christians very little advanced in the way of godliness; and you must not suppose that the world is disapproving of the Christian character every time it pronounces a verdict unfavourable to what you have done, or to some feature that

you have developed. It may be a disapproval of you, not of Christ in you. But still, the character of the world is, that it disapproves of the whole motives, character, separation, protest, principles, career, and hopes, of a Christian. It first does not understand them and cannot appreciate them, and next, as far as it knows them, it positively disapproves of them. It says, the world is not workable upon these principles. I have no doubt that this dynasty told Joseph that his principles were all very well for a Millennium, but they were not good for Egypt; that he would be a very good prime minister for Millennial days, but that he was not a practical prime minister for the dynasty of Pharaoh. And therefore, this king not only did not appreciate the pure patriotism and lofty morality of Joseph, but he positively disapproved of a Christian altogether as either a candidate for, or an occupant of the office of prime minister of Egypt.

But this expression "knew not" implies also hate, as well as disapproval. "If the world hate you," says our Lord, "ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Now it seems strange that the world should hate the Christian; and yet it is explained in that Book which explains all the perplexities and incongruities of human nature. It tells us distinctly that the carnal heart, that is, the natural heart, that with which we are born, is enmity against God. Therefore, if the world be now what it was, though

very much, I admit, improved in its general tone ; and if the Christian be what he once was, then the same antipathy must exist still. It may be differently developed, but it must still exist. The world is not radically changed ; it is improved—there is no doubt of that, but still it is the world ; and the Christian is not radically different from what he was in St. John's days. If he be what he was, he is a man born again, the Christian whom the world knoweth not. If this be the case, these two are opposites—light and darkness, truth and error, the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan—and therefore, a world that not only cannot appreciate the traits of your character, but that also disapproves of them, as far as it knows them, will proceed a step further, and hate you, and a step further, and show that hatred by trying to exterminate and extinguish you ; but as it cannot kill in the present day, at least in this country, it will misrepresent you. Are you earnest ? It will say, you have a heated imagination. Are you strict and consistent ? It will say, you are a hypocrite. Are you a professor of a purer and a nobler creed ? It will be said, it is because you seek applause, or reward of men. Every thing you do will be misconstrued ; every thing that you are will be misrepresented. But when the world has the power, as it has in Tuscany, then it assumes another and a sterner feature,—it puts you in prison, and would, if it could, renew the massacres of St. Bartholomew, and reproduce the scenes of an age that some thought had passed away, but that seems in some parts of Europe to be coming on again. Thus, the world cannot

appreciate our principles; it disapproves of them; it hates those who are the exponents of them.

Well, what are we to infer from all this? First, be comforted, it has been so from the beginning; and therefore, the world was and is the world still; and the Christian, whether in Joseph's days, or our own, was and is the Christian still. And let us recollect this, that if the world thus treats the Christian, it so treated Christ. If they have done so to the Master, we may expect they will do so to the servant. And if we are not so treated, we should examine ourselves to see what is the reason. Has the world about us become Christian? or are we become worldly? Why has the contrast failed? why has the antagonism ceased? Are we faithful, true, steadfast, firm exponents of Christianity, living epistles, the lights of the world, the salt of the earth? I speak as unto reasonable men: judge ye. But let us recollect also for our comfort that, if we are thus treated, the world passeth away; it does not last for ever. And let us recollect that one day we shall be manifest, for the sons of God shall be made manifest. The world will then have passed away, and we alone shall inherit the kingdom. Above all rejoice in this, that whoever hates us, God does not. Whoever condemns, God acquits. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God!"

The world will be this year what it has been last; let us not fear it, or be alarmed on account of what man feels, but see that in the world we are not of it, but superior to it in life, in aim, in character, in

hope. And let us go forth into the years which are before us, just as Joseph left the palace of Pharaoh, and went into obscurity,—his heart remaining the same, his love to God and his allegiance to his law remaining unchanged. Let the world change, let us abide. Let it alter its treatment of us, if it so be ; but let our position in reference to it be held fast, the position of protest against its evil, and of usefulness in efforts to do it good, and awaken it to a sense of the need, the value and preciousness of the Gospel of Christ. And in going into the world, whether into its ups or its downs, its shadow or its sunshine, let us seek to have more and more manifested in ourselves the character of Him who is our Great Example, and run the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith. When he was reviled, he reviled not again. “He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.” “Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” “If you be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are you ; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.” Let us never forget that there is a distinction, not mechanical, nor visible, but real, spiritual, and inner, between the Church and the world, between one who is born again and one who is not. It is very important that that difference, that mighty chasm, should not be in imagination filled up, in fact it never can be. Either we must go over to the world and be of it, or the world must come over to us and be one of us ; but

as long as the world and the Church exist, so long it is light and darkness, truth and error, and there will be opposition, there must not be compromise. Let us be thankful when that opposition is mild, let us be patient when it becomes severe ; and let us in the world remember that the world passeth away, but that they who fear God shall endure for ever, and they that by death or life turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars and the brightness of the sun for evermore. Weep as though ye wept not, rejoice as though ye rejoiced not. Use the world as not abusing it, for the fashion of it passeth away.

We must never take office anywhere, or under any circumstances, at the expense of concealing our distinctive principles, or compromising the higher service of our Master in heaven. Allegiance to Him is first and last. Duty to Him is the supreme and governing consideration. All must give way to this, and this must give way to nothing. Our light must shine in the world as in the sanctuary. Our character must be distinct and definite in the outward as in the inward circle. The world must come to us, we cannot go to the world. We need not be sour, exclusive, bigoted ; but we must be firm, stedfast, immoveable. Great decision may be combined with great gentleness. The firmness of the rock and the flexibility of the wave are not contradictions. For this purpose let us study the Great Example, imbibe His spirit, and draw inspiration from that ever accessible but never exhaustible fountain. We are in an alien country—our quietest retreats are bivouacs, not homes. Let us walk as pilgrims and

strangers, looking for a city and a better country. So patriarchs sojourned—so martyrs lived of whom the world was not worthy. In due time we shall reap if we faint not.

CHAPTER VII.

GIFTS. THE MISSION OF MOSES AND AARON. HARDENING OF PHARAOH'S HEART. MIRACLES AND MARVELS. ROD TURNED INTO A SERPENT. WATER INTO BLOOD.

You remember that, at the close of the previous chapter, Moses had again expressed his doubts of success, by alleging his conscious deficiency of eloquence or the power of utterance ; and therefore that he was not fit to go in to Pharaoh, and try to persuade him to let the people go. God replies to that objection in his own majestic and impressive terms, which we may thus paraphrase :—" The Lord said unto Moses, This is the answer to all your difficulties ; this is to be your encouragement ; I have made thee to be a god to Pharaoh ; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." In the Hebrew Scriptures, magistrates, as representing a portion of the jurisdiction of God, are called gods. The expression was very commonly applied to those who were possessed of dignity or official power, " ye are gods ;" and in this sense Moses is said to have been made a god unto Pharaoh ; and Aaron his brother was to be his prophet. You are already aware of the reason of this distinction between the two brethren. Moses complained that he had no power of eloquence, or was uncircumcised of lip ; and God's reply to that

was, "You, Moses, shall be the oracle or depository of truth ; and Aaron, who has the gift of eloquence, shall unfold and express it." God did not alter their constitutional characteristics ; but he made use of their existing constitutional peculiarities to do his great work. So still, when God employs men to execute his purposes, he does not re-create them, but he sanctifies them, he uses them as they are. Anybody reading the New Testament, will see that each writer has a style of his own ; so much so, that if you were to read a few verses from one or the other of the writers, I should be able to say whether they were written by Matthew, or Mark, or Paul, or Peter. God did not destroy the idiosyncracies of the sacred penmen, but he retained their variety of style, and consecrated that variety to be the more eloquent vehicle of important and precious truth. So, when God sent Moses and Aaron to do his work in Egypt, he did not make Moses eloquent, which he was not, nor did he make Aaron learned, which he was not ; but he made Aaron, the eloquent man, draw upon the stores of Moses, the learned man, and thus each did efficiently and naturally the work that God had assigned them. So, at the era of the Reformation, Luther's eloquence and energy would have been extremely defective, if he could not have fallen back upon the rich stores of Melancthon's learning. So in the Acts of the Apostles, the energy and boldness of Peter were shown in his speaking ; and the love, patience, perseverance, and piety of John, were shown in his keeping silence. God thus takes different men of different constitutional peculiarities for different purposes.

“ Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit....For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom ; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit ; to another faith by the same Spirit ; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit ; to another the working of miracles ; to another prophecy ; to another discerning of spirits ; to another *divers* kinds of tongues ; to another the interpretation of tongues : but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.”

God instructs Moses and Aaron as to what they should do ; but he adds, “ I will harden Pharaoh’s heart.” I explained to you, on a former occasion, that God is often said in Scripture to do things directly, when the context shows that he did them indirectly. To be the *occasion* of a thing, is totally distinct from being the *cause* of a thing. I build an hospital for the cure of the sick ; but in the course of its erection, a scaffolding gives way, and a workman is killed. The hospital was not the cause, but the occasion of that death. Jesus came into the world, not to send peace, but a sword. He came directly to send peace ; but he came indirectly and incidentally to send war. The Gospel is not the cause of war, but the occasion of it. And so, when God said, “ I will harden Pharaoh’s heart,” it implied, “ I will show such signs, and bring to his conscience such motives, that if he is not moved, melted, and subdued, the reaction of that influence will end in his being hardened more and more.” Another evidence of this would be the fact, that, in some passages it is said that Pharaoh hardened his own heart ; and in

the 14th verse of this chapter, where our translation unfortunately is wrong, we are told that "the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened;" it should be translated, "is heavy;" and in the 22nd verse again it is said, "Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them." The 13th verse should be rendered the same as this. You see a great variety of phrases employed, but all imply that the influences that were employed by God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and not that God did it directly. Nothing can be so absurd as to say that God showed to Pharaoh reasons of repentance, which he prevented him by physical power from accepting. That is not, and cannot be the meaning. It means simply that God was the incidental occasion of hardening a heart which would not yield to forces, motives, and reasons, adequate in themselves to melt and subdue it.

But God says, "While you shall not succeed in touching Pharaoh's heart, my word shall not return unto me void; for the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord." The message was sent to the monarch; it failed in producing its legitimate influence upon him; but the residue of that influence reached the people, and many of the Egyptians knew and learned for the first time that God was Jehovah.

At this time, we are told, Moses was eighty years of age, and Aaron eighty-three. This was not old age. Moses lived, as I have said before, to be one hundred and twenty. He was, therefore, now just at the close of the meridian of life. I mentioned also before, that there is no evidence in the Bible that man's life has been shortened since Moses'

death ; and that, as far as we can gather from Divine interposition, one hundred and twenty is the proper age of man. The 90th Psalm describes an abnormal state of life in the wilderness. There Moses himself complains that their life was shortened to threescore and ten, by the existing severity and pressure of their circumstances, not by the ordinance of God. And it remains a problem, whether, if men were not less oppressed by anxious cares and thoughts, ambition, vainglory, and pride, and wrath, and malice, they would not live to a much greater age ; and whether it be not true, that, in proportion as Christianity gains in its sanctifying influence on the soul, the whole social and physical system will not be correspondingly elevated and ameliorated also.

Pharaoh said, "Show a miracle for you." Now that was not at all an unreasonable request. When a new revelation is made, you require, not simply that it shall be suitable and agreeable to your judgment, but that it shall be accompanied with such credentials as prove it to have come directly from God. A miracle has always been regarded as the evidence of a revelation from on high. It is not itself the revelation, but the evidence of it. The wax upon the deed, and the seal of one of the parties, is not the deed ; but it is the evidence that that deed is accepted and identified by the party whose seal is attached to it. The miracles in the New Testament were, if I may so speak, the pedestals of great truths. The miracles which our Lord wrought were not mere freaks of omnipotence, but exhibitions of power and benevolence, made to attest that a certain doctrine or a certain message was from God. In the

case of Moses and Aaron, every miracle that they wrought was, first, to prove to Pharaoh that they had a Divine commission to call Israel out of Egypt; and next, if they had not beneficence in them, they were all fitted to humble Egypt, by awakening them to a sense of the idolatry in which it indulged, and to prove to that nation, by overthrowing the ground and foundation of their hopes, that they were worshipping only lying vanities. For instance, the second miracle recorded in this chapter—that of turning the river into blood—was not simply an exhibition of God's power to be a credential to Moses and Aaron, but it was also a punishment inflicted upon the national deity of the Egyptians themselves. The Nile was their god. Its water is recorded to have been the sweetest that ever was tasted; and it is said that, in these modern times, the Turks are so fond of it, that they are known to eat salt beforehand, in order that they may enjoy this delicious water more. It was, no doubt, in the days of Pharaoh equally delicious; and it is this fact that gives such emphasis to this expression, "The Egyptians shall loathe to drink of the water of the river."

But the first miracle recorded here is that of turning the rod into a serpent, or rather a crocodile—it is not *nahash*, but *tannin*,—and the Egyptian magicians doing so likewise. The question which will occur in the course of our subsequent reading of Moses' doings in Egypt, is, Did the magicians really do supernatural things? This has been a great controversy in every age. Some passages seem to show that they really did supernatural deeds, and others seem to show that they only made the attempt to do

them. I do not see any difficulty in supposing that they did supernatural deeds. Grant this, that the existence of Satan is a reality, that he is a fiend armed with an archangel's force, and capable of wielding an archangel's wisdom, and I cannot conceive it to be very difficult to believe that he may do upon the earth deeds that are supernatural, as well as what all admit, succeed in touching the human mind at every point, and persuade it to deeds and thoughts that are sinful. I think it is even a greater miracle that Satan should be able, in spite of my will, to touch my mind and tempt it, than that he should be able to turn a rod into a serpent, or the serpent back again into the rod. I think the former is evidence of as great power as the latter any day. It is said that Aaron's rod became a serpent, and that the magicians, wise men, or sorcerers, for all these phrases are synonymous, "did in like manner with their enchantments." These enchantments were supposed to indicate connexion with superior powers in the invisible world; and the statement here that their rods became serpents, but that the victory was gained by Aaron's rod swallowing up their rods, seems very literal and natural. One does not like to dilute and to describe deeds done, not attempted, and waste down the force of express Scripture statements into figures, unless there be very clear and satisfactory reasons for doing so.

But, then, the other miracle seems to tell in the opposite direction. Aaron's rod was stretched over the river, and it was turned into blood. What an awful spectacle must it have been to the Egyptians to see the illustrious Nile, whose waters were the

source of the fertility of their land, and whose deliciousness was to them so refreshing, and which they worshipped and adored as a god, turned into blood, and all its fish die! If they drank, they died of poison; if they drank not, they died of thirst. The milder exhibition did not melt the heart of Pharaoh. God has recourse to a severer. I do not think that those rationalistic commentators are to be followed, who say that the river merely assumed the appearance of blood. The statement is express and distinct; and so many items are given of the resulting consequences of this change, that one cannot suppose that it was not literally turned into blood.

We then read, that "the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments." Now here it seems as if they had not power to do these miracles; because if all the water was turned into blood, what water was there left for the magicians to act upon? What could they do that could at all correspond with the stupendous feat that Moses and Aaron had just performed? This last would seem, therefore, to have been an attempt on their part in which they failed; and this might lead one to suppose that their other supposed miracles might have been merely attempts that beguiled and deceived the few that were ready to be deceived, but not really and truly miracles.

How interesting is the contrast to all this that is presented in the Gospels! The Levitical economy dawned in water turned into blood, in judgment, in punishment. The Christian economy beautifully dawned in water turned into wine, and the very first miracle that Jesus wrought was at a marriage feast, as if he would go forth to sympathize with nature's

bright things before he went out to weep with them that wept; as if he would enter into life's sunny spots, in order to show that Christianity sweetens and sanctifies them, before he went into life's darker and sadder ones, carrying there those consolations that the world cannot give, and that the world cannot take away.

But before we close our perusal of the miracles done in Egypt, I shall have an opportunity of setting before you the reasons that have been given on both sides—the one class of reasons to show that the miracles were real; the other, that they were only attempts by the magicians to imitate the miracles done by Moses and Aaron.

The schoolmen say, the magicians did *mirum*, a marvel; not *miraculum*, a miracle.

CHAPTER VIII.

PHARAOH A TYPE. GOD'S DOINGS. NILE FOR SEVEN DAYS IS BLOOD. THE PLAGUE OF FROGS. EGYPTIAN OVENS. EFFORTS OF MAGICIANS. SIN AND ITS PENALTIES INSEPARABLE. SWARM OF GNATS AND BEETLES. PHARAOH'S RELENTING. LESSON.

PHARAOH is a too exact representative of the natural man, in every age and phasis of human life and human experience. He is the representative of one determined to have his own way ; and yet a specimen of one who must be either subdued by Almighty grace, or made ultimately to concur in the way and purpose of God. God might, by the exercise of omnipotence, at once have laid him prostrate, and let his people go ; but in doing otherwise he had a lesson to teach to all mankind, as well as a benefit and a blessing to secure for his people Israel. No fact in the history of God's dealings with his people is a dead fact ; all He does is meant for later ages, to be impressive to our hearts, and to teach us lessons about ourselves, and of our responsibility and lowliness, that no other fact could have so admirably taught.

It appears, that during seven days the river had rolled a current red with blood, and that the whole land of Egypt was in a state of dismay, terror, and alarm, at the awful visitation that had fallen upon it. The reason why it lasted seven days was, no doubt,

to let Pharaoh see that it was not an incidental phenomenon, but a clear and designed and direct infliction of God. If it had occurred for an hour, and disappeared in an hour, it would have been said that it was some colouring of some insect in the water, or that it was some accidental tinge from the clay or soil of the mountains, that it was some carbonate or muriate of iron, or other chemical solution mixed with the waters, But when the effects became so palpable as are here recorded, and these effects lasted so long, there could be no mistaking that this was a judgment from on high.

Well, when Moses went to Pharaoh, and asked him to let the people go, and he refused, then the judgment was inflicted which is threatened in the third verse, namely, the banks of the river brought forth frogs abundantly; and so universal was this infliction, that they went into Pharaoh's house, and into his bedchamber, and upon his bed, and into the house of his servants, and upon his people, and into their ovens and kneading-troughs. One can conceive nothing more horrible, or more offensive, or more completely an infliction upon a great, wealthy, and powerful nation. But it strikes one as a strange thing to speak of frogs going into ovens. As our ovens are, of course, the approach of a frog would be impossible from the intensity of the heat with which the oven is charged, and its height from the ground. But an Egyptian oven was a hole in the earth, in which they put wood for a fire, over which they put an earthen pitcher, and the bread was placed inside that, and baked by the action of the fire in the hole beneath. It seems to us a barbarous mode, but it

was the Egyptian one. And you can conceive that when this hole was filled with frogs, the preparation of bread would thereby become utterly impracticable.

We read next, that "the magicians did so with their enchantments." Now there are two solutions of this. It seems in some parts, that the magicians made the attempt to do these things, and could not: for it is asserted in the 18th verse, that "the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not." But then it seems in other passages, that they unquestionably succeeded in doing so; and it is the opinion of some of the best divines, that they were enabled, by infranatural aid. And perhaps the solution that has been suggested to me is true, that some of these judgments were divine inflictions of what the magicians had been in the habit of doing on a much smaller scale. You are aware that in the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew verb, there is the perfect, and also the imperfect tense. For instance, *docuit* means that he taught, or did it at once; but *docebat* means that he was teaching, or was in the habit of doing so. Now here, the words "The magicians did so" may mean that they were in the habit of doing a miracle, not in quantity, but in effect, apparently as good as this. And since Moses and Aaron had not done anything much superior to what the magicians had been in the habit of doing, therefore Pharaoh's heart was hardened, such a miracle not being sufficiently conclusive of Divine power.

However, "Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said," evidently pained and grieved at the extent

of the last affliction, "Intreat the Lord," recognizing Jehovah, "that he may take away the frogs from me." Now that is human nature thoroughly. Whenever man is in affliction, his prayer is, "Take it away;" but he never dreams, until he is taught of God, of taking away the sin that brings on the affliction. For instance, in 1849 many prayed, and prayed most justly, "Take away the cholera;" but they did not care to help to take away the provocative of it,—the wretched habitations in which the poorer classes dwell. Now, we have no right to pray God to take away an affliction which falls upon us judicially, paternally, or penally, unless we show by our own acts that we are parting with the sin which brings down the judgment upon us. And so, in the time of the recent papal aggression, many prayed, "Take away this offensive intrusion on the throne and jurisdiction of our country." But what brought that in? No doubt the very greatly-tolerated Tractarianism that overspread a section of the Church; and if they who should, had taken away the Puseyism, we never should have had the Popery: if you had nipped the bud, you never would have had the full-blown blossom. You must take away the sin that provokes, and then God will take away the judgment that follows that sin. So, if a man is visited with affliction, he says, "Take away this calamity;" but he does not dream that all outward visitations of Providence have a connection more or less remote with something that is wrong; that they are not the afflictions of God, so much as generated by the faults and sins of the individual himself.

Then we read, that when Pharaoh said, "Intreat

the Lord that he take away the frogs, but let my hardness of heart remain ; take away the judgment, but let the poor Israelites be ground to the earth in making me rich, and prosperous, and great," Moses said, evidently bearing and forbearing, "Glory over me ;" that is, "Very well ; I wish you to get all the credit, if there be any at all, in making the suggestion. I want no glory ; I desire only to do good. And therefore, glory over me ; I give you every advantage. And to show how anxious I am to accommodate my preferences to your comfort, when shall I intreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people ? I will go at any hour of the day or night." And Pharaoh said, "To-morrow." You will naturally ask, why to-morrow ? The answer is, that the heart of Pharaoh, which after all was but your heart and mine, intensified and magnified, was essentially unbelieving, full of blasphemy and wickedness ; and he had the latent persuasion that the frogs were not really an affliction of God ; that they were, after all, a natural phenomenon ; and he thought he would just wait one day more, and see if the wind that brought them would carry them away ; since then he would be able more decidedly than ever to hold fast Israel, and defy the attempts of Moses and Aaron to let them go. Moses, however, said (and here is the Christian forbearance of the minister of a people so much trodden down, afflicted and persecuted) "Very well ; be it according to thy word : that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the Lord our God." Moses and Aaron accordingly cried or prayed unto the Lord, and he did according to the word of Moses, and the frogs were removed.

Then comes the fourth judgment, "Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt." This is altogether a wrong translation—there is not the least doubt that the creature meant is the mosquito gnat. In the Greek Septuagint the word is *σκνιφες*, which denotes gnats. And those who have been in warm climates know what a tremendously vexatious infliction would be, the whole atmosphere filled with mosquito gnats, making life intolerable, and existence a perpetual fever. There is no doubt that this was the real infliction. The other is scarcely possible in Eastern climates; and it led the magicians to say, when they could not produce the same result, "This is the finger of God;" and yet, you observe, Pharaoh's heart was still hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.

We then read of another infliction, called in our translation "swarms of flies;" but you will find that the words "of flies" are in italics, which denotes that those words are not in the original, but have been interpolated by the translators to make the idea more clear. All that the original says of this fifth judgment is, in the twenty-first verse, "I will send swarms;" in the twenty-second verse, "No swarms shall be there;" and again, in the twenty-fourth verse, "The land was corrupted by reason of the swarm." I think that this was a swarm of beetles. You will see in the British Museum specimens of the Carabean beetle, which was almost worshipped as a god by the Egyptians; and it would seem that the swarms that covered the land were swarms just of the very deities that they worshipped. Every

plague had some allusion to the popular mythology of the Egyptians, and was meant, while demonstrating the power of the Lord God of Israel, to pour contempt upon all the gods of Pharaoh; and as the beetle was one of the divinities of the Egyptians, who were thus morally and spiritually degraded, though intellectually great—striking proof how the intellect may be filled with light, and yet there may be no warmth in the heart, and no beauty in the life, and no purity in worship—it was an infliction upon one of the deities that they worshipped, and no less so on its worshippers; and was thus meant to demonstrate the power of God, and to degrade an object of Egyptian worship.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses, evidently relenting a little, every blow coming heavier upon the reluctant heart of the king, and producing unexpected impressions and effects; and he said, “Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.” In the eighth verse he had promised this, and broken his word; but now he says he will fulfil that promise. You recollect that the request was, “Let us go three days’ journey into the wilderness.” Pharaoh relents so far as to withdraw his obstinate refusal of their request to offer a sacrifice, but he says, “You must not go so far into the wilderness,” being afraid of their escape, “but sacrifice in this the land of Egypt.” But Moses said, “That we cannot do. We must either have the whole, or we can have nothing. And there is an obvious reason for it. If we were to sacrifice in this land, we should sacrifice a lamb, a heifer, or an ox. Now you know that these be your gods; and if, as we are bound by law to do, we should sacrifice these animals

to the Lord Jehovah, then we should offer up what would be a perfect abomination in your sight. We have no right to give unnecessary offence to any. It is not the way to enlighten those who are opposed to us, to pour contempt upon them. It is not the way to win the victim of superstition from his errors, to set these errors in a ridiculous light. We ought to try faithfully, and in love, to convince, to convert, and to win; but we are not warranted needlessly to offend the prejudices of any party whatever. Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away,"—his avarice relaxing, but still strong. He consents to let them go into the wilderness at last, but instead of going three days, he only wishes them to go three hours' journey; so that in case of their attempting to escape, he might bring them back by his armies. "And Moses said, I will intreat the Lord that the swarms of beetles may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people to-morrow; but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting thy people go to sacrifice to the Lord."—You have deceived me so often, you have given promises made only to be broken so frequently, that I must beg of you not to deceive me any more. Moses went out and intreated the Lord, and the Lord did what Pharaoh asked; but the result was, that "Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go."

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you also an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

CHAPTER IX.

REASON FOR GOD'S DEALING. A PRECEDENT. GOD'S REVERENCE
TO THE CONSTITUTION OF HIS CREATURES. PLAGUE ON
CATTLE. ANIMAL SUFFERING. PLAGUE OF BODILY DISEASE.
PLAGUE OF HAIL.

I AM sure it will naturally suggest itself to every reader and hearer of the remarkable series of judgments recorded in this chapter, to inquire, why did not God at once, by one stroke, prostrate all the power of Pharaoh, and emancipate his people? Why did he send judgment after judgment, to convince the unconvinced, instead of wielding at once omnipotent power, and setting forth his people upon their majestic and glorious exodus? The only available answer is found in the analogies presented by God's dealings with mankind. We may put many a "why," to which silence is the only and the most reverend answer. It is recorded here, as inspired matter of fact, and we are quite sure, that, as certain as it was the doing of God, so certain it was worthy of his justice, wisdom, goodness, mercy, and truth. But may it not have been done, and stand recorded here, as a precedent of his dealings with nations in all ages? Do we not find still, that, when a nation (for we are here speaking of nations) sins, God sends one judgment, and if that does not produce a due effect, that he sends another, and another, and

another still? Thus we read, in Amos iv.

“And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered. So two or three cities wandered unto one city, to drink water; but they were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured them: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a fire-brand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.”

It seems as if God would not force man by power, but persuade him by mercy, by love, by patience, by forbearance, by truth. It seems, in all God's dealings, both in the Gospel and in the law, as if He had that reverence for the creature he has made, that he will ever treat that creature, not as a machine,

to be driven, but as a rational and responsible being, to be drawn with cords of love, and with the bands of mercy. It was said by one of the greatest orators of our country, that such is our constitutional freedom, that all the winds of heaven may enter at every cranny, and all the rains of the sky may enter by every tile, in the humblest hut of the humblest peasant, but not even royalty itself can enter without that peasant's permission and consent. It looks as if God would treat his creatures in the same way. It seems as if even the prince of the kings of the earth will not force an entrance into man's mind against his will. God made us with the lofty attributes of responsibility, volition, feeling, and he deals with us, not as an Omnipotent Being, who can crush a frail and fragile creature, but as a Ruler, a Father, and Friend, resolved to persuade, or to give up the effort altogether. This explains, in some degree, his dealings with Pharaoh in this and the previous chapter.

To turn more immediately to this chapter, Moses again approaches Pharaoh, by the command of his God, and beseeches him to let his people go; and then he tells him, that, if he refuse again, there will be sent on all the cattle of Egypt "a grievous murrain." This is some disease, our English word for which is derived probably from the Greek verb *μαραινω*, which means to wither and fade away; or it may be derived from the French word *mourir*—"to die or perish." It was, no doubt, some wasting or consumptive disease that attacked all the cattle of the land, and that emphatically and distinctively indicated that the hand of God was upon them. But, at

the same time, while this disease lighted upon the cattle that belonged to Pharaoh, the cattle of the Israelites were not one of them touched. Now, this was a very palpable distinction, meant to persuade Pharaoh that these visitations were not accidents, that might be explained by the laws of natural phenomena, but that they were direct strokes of God, and that they were drawn down by the sins of the one class, as they were averted by the loyalty and fealty to God exhibited by the other.

It seems a very sad thing that the inoffensive cattle should suffer; and the sceptic will not be slow to ask, Why should God smite the cattle? But the great law, that seems to run through all the dealings of God, is that man, the great lord of creation, brought ruin, not only upon himself, but upon all creatures, and still, as he sins, his subjects suffer. Wherever you see an animal die, a leaf fall, or the lower creation suffer, there you have, as in a faithful mirror, the reflection of man's primal and great sin. Adam's sin brought death, not only upon himself, but upon all creation. At the flood, also, we read that animals perished; and if we retire from Scripture altogether, and take the ground that the Deist will, at least, accept as proper, we shall find that if war is waged, the beautiful horse suffers as well as the bravest soldier; and we see everywhere, constantly, that animals suffer from man's doings. Therefore, if it be an argument against God's book, that animals are visited with punishment because of man's sin, it will be an argument against God's government of the world, that animals suffer because of man's misdoings. I am one of those who believe, not that the

brute creation will be raised from the dead, but that a day comes, when the whole animal creation shall be emancipated, and restored to its pristine happiness and fellowship with each other and with man. There is no doubt that all the animal creation is in an abnormal and unnatural state; but there is express prophecy that a day comes, when creation's lord shall be reinstated in his lost prerogatives and dignity—when all that fell with him, shall rejoice together with him. Nay, the Apostle Paul says, (Romans viii. 22,) “*πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις*”—“all creation groans and travails in pain, waiting for”—what?—“the manifestation”—that is, the perfect company and gathering—“of the sons”—or people—“of God.”

But notwithstanding this plague, Pharaoh's heart was still hardened, and therefore another plague was sent. Ashes were to be sprinkled towards heaven by the servant of God, and disease should in an instant break out upon man and beast throughout the land. The magicians were affected by this plague, and, after this period, they disappear altogether. Their services seem no longer to have been required by their infatuated ruler. They, no doubt, felt themselves perfectly humbled, by being afflicted by a disease, no longer now outside themselves, but of which they were the suffering and helpless victims. They disappear from the stage; and yet, notwithstanding all this, Pharaoh was not changed. It is said, in the 12th verse, “And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh.” Now, from the beginning, the expression has been, “The heart of Pharaoh was hardened;” and as that is the common expression, we must

explain this peculiar and rare one in the light of the common one. Clearly it means, as I said before, that these dealings of God with Pharaoh, instead of softening his heart only hardened it. God is said here to do that directly which he did indirectly. It reads as if he were the cause of it, when really he was only the occasion of it. Just as the gospel is the savour of death to some—not the cause of it, but the occasion of it. And this removes all possibility of imputation upon God for these dealings with Pharaoh.

The 16th verse I have heard most erroneously quoted, as if “for this cause have I raised thee up,” meant, “For this cause I made or created you at the first.” Now, the words “raise up” here, are the same as those used in the Epistle of St. James, where he says, that the Lord shall raise up the sick man—that is, restore him to health. So the Lord says here, “For this cause I have raised you up once, twice, thrice, out of the wreck of each successive judgment; I have spared you; I have not suffered you to be utterly destroyed, just in order that you may be the medium, in my hand, of setting forth my glory, and declaring my forbearing patience and goodness to all the nations of the earth.”

We then read of a grievous hail and rain, that was brought down upon the whole land of Egypt. Now, Egypt has very little rain—it is not true that there is none, though I read that thunder and lightning are rarer in that land than in most countries. You can conceive, therefore, what an impression must have been produced upon the whole people of Egypt, when the electric fluid, that rushed along the ground, darted

from the earth to the sky, and from sky to earth, with ceaseless coruscations, accompanied with hail and rain, and the destruction of the herbs, and all the trees—that is, all sorts of trees—throughout the whole land. It seems that this judgment, from its overwhelming majesty, made a very great impression upon Pharaoh; for he said, “I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Entreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.” Now, there is really much in this confession of Pharaoh, that looks like genuine repentance. First, his confession was open, and this was most favourable; secondly, he showed a sense of sin—also very favourable; thirdly, he spoke of his sin as committed against God; fourthly, he owned God’s justice in this matter—“The Lord is righteous;” fifthly, he indicated that he had some idea of Divine mercy; for he says, “Intreat the Lord”—evidently with an idea that God might be merciful; and, sixthly, he formed a good resolution, “I will let you go.” Now, this looks like genuine repentance. But where was the fault? In what respect was it defective? I answer, first, it was forced by terror, not generated by love. Many persons have an idea that repentance is the product of terror, alarm, dismay. Such is not repentance. Repentance springs from a saving sight of Jesus Christ—the manifestation of God’s love to lost and perishing sinners. Repentance is not generated by the thunders of the law, nor the terrors of death, but by the sight of Christ crucified for our transgressions. What does the Bible say? “They shall

look upon Him whom they have pierced," and then "they shall mourn." And again, "Christ is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins." In other words, repentance is not produced by the hail, thunder, or rains of judgment, but by the gentle falling of the silent dew, that saturates the soil upon which it falls, and creates responsive repentance, love, worship, and loyalty to God. In the second place, Pharaoh's repentance here was destitute of humiliation. There was no real humbling of himself; and, in the next place, there was no renunciation of his sin. His cry was always, "Take away the frogs, take away the hail," but never "take away the sin." And, lastly, it was temporary. He no sooner felt it, than it was dissipated, and disappeared.

Now, wherever there is real repentance, remember it is the result of faith in Christ Jesus; secondly, it humbles; and, lastly, it is permanent. Let us learn this lesson from the whole, that no preaching of terror, no infliction of judgments, will ever make a person repent. That must be done by Calvary, not by Mount Sinai; by the sweet influence of the gospel, not by the thunder and the terrors of a broken law.

The following very illustrative observations, not, however, exempt from difficulties, are by Hengstenberg, the German divine:—

THE CONNECTION OF THE SUPERNATURAL WITH THE NATURAL IN THE
PLAGUES OF EGYPT.

The part of Exodus which we now proceed to examine, is of great importance for our object, first and principally in that the supernatural events described, all find a foundation in the natural phe-

nomena of Egypt, and stand in close connection with ordinary occurrences, and also on account of the many separate references in the narrative, which show how very accurate the author's knowledge of Egypt was.

As respects the first point, many have wished to make the connection of the wonders with the natural phenomena of Egypt, an argument against the Pentateuch. So, indeed, the English deists have done, as, for example, Morgan.—Among those more recent, V. Bohlen is conspicuous. Moses, he remarks, in order to avoid the suspicion of self-deception, was at least obliged to express himself in the mildest manner possible among his contemporaries, who were so well acquainted with Egypt, if he wished to make the commonly observed natural phenomena avail as miracles. But it is perfectly clear, that these occurrences, as they are related, notwithstanding their foundation in nature, always maintained their character as miracles, and consequently are sufficient to prove what they are intended to prove, and to accomplish what they did accomplish. Attempts to merge the supernatural in the natural, such as have been made by Du Bois Ayme, and then by Eichhorn, will not accomplish their design. Indeed, the unusual force in which the common exhibitions of nature here manifest themselves, and especially their rapid succession, while at other times only a single one exhibits itself with unusual intensity, as well as the fact that Eichhorn, notwithstanding all the unnatural misrepresentations in which he allowed himself, yet found material for a treatise on the wonderful year of Egypt,—if we at the same time consider these events in connection with the changing cause of them, and also take into account the exemption of the land of Goshen,—bring us to the limits of the miraculous; for the transition to the miraculous is reached by the extraordinary in its highest gradation.

Moses' Rod changed to a Serpent.

After these general remarks, we turn to particular explanations. A sign, which is of a harmless nature, precedes, in Exodus vii. 8—13, the signs which are comprehended in the number ten as a perfect number, and which are also plagues. Trial is first made, whether Pharaoh, in reference to whom Calvin so strikingly says, "There is presented us in the person of *one* abandoned, an example of human arrogance and rebellion," will not become wise without severe measures. Moses' rod is changed into a serpent; the Egyptian magicians accomplish, at least in appearance, the same thing; but Moses' rod swallows up their rods. This counter-wonder of the Egyptian magicians is founded on the peculiar condition of Egypt; much more is

the Mosaic sign—the same by which indeed Moses had already, by the Divine command, proved his commission from God, among the elders of his people. Moses was furnished with power to perform that which the Egyptian magicians most especially gloried in, and by which they most of all supported their authority.

The incantation of serpents has been native to Egypt from the most ancient even to the present time. The French scholars, in their description, have given the most accordant accounts of it. Even those who entered upon an examination of the subject with most absolute unbelief, have been forced to the conviction that there is something in it—that the *Psylli* are found in possession of a secret charm, which places them in a condition to bring about the most wonderful consequences. "We confess," it is said, that we, "far removed from all easy credulity, have ourselves been witnesses of some things so wonderful, that we cannot consider the art of the serpent-tamers as entirely chimerical. We believed, at first, that they removed the teeth of serpents, and the stings of scorpions; but we have had opportunity to convince ourselves of the contrary." That they do not probably break out the poisonous teeth, Hasselquist also testifies, from personal observation. According to the account in the Description, the art passes from father to son. The *Psylli* form an association, claiming to be the only individuals who are able to charm serpents, and to free houses from them. Never does any other than the son of a *Psylli* attain to this ability. Serpents, in Egypt, often conceal themselves in the houses, and then become very dangerous. When anything of this kind is suspected, they have recourse to the *Psylli*. The French commander-in-chief wished, at a certain time, to examine the affair to the bottom. He called for the *Psylli*, and commanded them to produce from the palace a serpent, which, from traces discovered, was supposed to be there. The moist places were especially examined. There the *Psylli* called, by imitating the hissing, sometimes of the male, and sometimes of the female serpent. After two hours and a fourth, a serpent truly presented itself. In the religious festivals, the *Psylli* appear entirely naked, with the neck, arms, and other parts of the body coiled around by serpents, which they permit to sting and tear their breast and stomach, and effectually defend themselves against them with a sort of frenzy, pretending to wish to eat them alive. Their sleight of hand is very various. They are able, according to their assertions, to change the *Haie*—i. e. the species of serpent which they especially make use of for their tricks—into a rod, and compel them to feign themselves dead. When they wish to

perform this operation, they spit in the throat of the animal, compel it to shut up its mouth, and lay it down upon the ground. Then, as if in order to give a last command, they lay their hand upon its head, and immediately the serpent, stiff and motionless, falls into a kind of torpor. They wake it up when they wish, seizing it by the tail, and rolling it roughly between the hands." Du Bois Ayme gives his testimony to the same thing.

Whatever opinion they had of it, this is certain, that even in the first three signs, the superior power of the God of Israel made itself sufficiently known to any one who did not studiously seek a support for his unbelief and rebellion. They change, it matters not whether really or in appearance, their rods into serpents, but the rod of Moses swallows up their rods; they also change, at least on a small scale, water into blood; but they are not able to restore the blood to its former state. In like manner, imitating on a small scale the miracle of Moses, they brought up frogs upon the land, but they were not able to free it from the plague of frogs. "For the punishment of the Egyptians," says Theodoret, "God gave also to magicians power, but not for removing punishment, since the king had not enough of his plagues, but even commanded the magicians to increase the chastisement; so God also punished him through these. Thou art not yet satisfied with the punishment inflicted by my servants, so punish I thee also by thine own." And the relative power of the Egyptian magicians in the beginning, must serve to show in so much clearer light their entire impotence, as it was first exhibited in the little gnats, and then continued invariable. The contest was first intentionally carried on in a sphere to which the Egyptian magicians, as we certainly know with reference to the first sign, had hitherto shown their principal power. After they had there been vanquished, the scene was changed to a sphere, in which they could not at all further contend, and the doom, which in this way came upon them, fell through them upon their gods.

The first Plague—the Water of Egypt changed to Blood.

We turn now to the *second* sign, which is also the first *plague*. It consists in changing the waters of the Nile, and the other waters of Egypt, into blood. It appears from Joel iii. 4, according to which, the moon shall be changed into blood, that there is no reason to suppose that literal blood is here meant. On the contrary, the change into blood can properly only have reference to the blood-red colour; so that the blood here is the same as the water, red as blood, in 2 Kings iii. 22. The designation is here evidently chosen for the sake of the symbolic character which this plague bears, as also the

water, red as blood, in the passage referred to in the book of Kings has a symbolic significance, announcing destruction to the enemies of Israel. To the Egyptians shall the reddened water be blood, reminding them of the innocent blood which they have shed, and pointing to the flowing, guilty blood to be shed. In this characteristic, this plague is coupled with the darkness which afterwards covered the whole land, as both also appear connected in Joel iii. 4: "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood." In the symbolic colours, arranged by the Egyptians, black was the colour of death and mourning; for that which is base and its author, the red colour was chosen, probably as the colour of blood.

This explanation of Hengstenberg is very doubtful indeed, and scarcely compatible with the sacred narration. What he adds, on the Nile, is well worth reading:—

The threat of Moses, and the described inconveniences which its fulfilment brought upon the Egyptians, is founded on the importance which the Nile water has for the Egyptians, and upon the enthusiastic love of the inhabitants of Egypt for it. The Nile water is almost the only drinkable water in Egypt; for the water of the few wells is distasteful and unwholesome. The Turks, according to Mascrier, find the water so pleasant, that they eat salt, in order to be able to drink more of it. They are accustomed to say, if Mohammed had drunk thereof, he would have asked immortality of God, so that he might always drink of this water. If the Egyptians undertake a pilgrimage to Mecca, or travel elsewhere, they speak of nothing but the delight which they shall experience when, on their return, they again drink of the Nile water, etc. It is very justly said, after these circumstances have been referred to, "He who has never understood anything of the pleasantness of the Nile water, and does not know how much of it the Egyptians are accustomed to drink, will now find, in the words of Moses, 'The Egyptians shall loathe,' &c.—a meaning which he has not before perceived. The sense is, they loathe the water which they at other times prefer before all the water in the world, even that which they have previously longed for. They prefer to drink well water, which, in their country, is so unpleasant."

In verse 15 it is said, "Go to Pharaoh in the morning; behold, he goeth out to the water, and meet him on the banks of the Nile." In like manner, in chap. viii. 16 (20), 'Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh: behold, he goeth forth to the water.'

Both passages are founded on the divine honours which the Egyptians paid to the Nile. Moses is commanded to meet Pharaoh, with a commission from the true God, whom Pharaoh wickedly resists, just when he is preparing to bring his daily offering to his false gods. In the first passage, this moment appears to be the more fitly chosen, since the threatened demonstration of the omnipotence of Jehovah is exhibited directly upon the false god. The Egyptians, even in the most ancient times, paid divine honours to the Nile. Especially was he zealously honoured, according to Champollion, at Nilopolis, where he had a temple. Herodotus mentions the priests of the Nile. Lucian says, "Its water is a common divinity to all of the Egyptians." The monuments bear witness to the same effect as the ancient authors; they indeed very particularly represent, that even the kings paid divine honours to the Nile. According to Champollion, there is, in a chapel at Ghebel Selseleh (Silsilis), a painting, of the time of the reign of Remeses II., which exhibits this king "offering wine to the god of the Nile, who, in the hieroglyphic inscription, is called Hapi Moou—the life-giving father of all existences." According to the inscription, this chapel is specially dedicated to this god. Remeses is called in it, "beloved of Hapi Moou—the father of the gods."

The Second Plague—the Frogs.

The account of the second plague, the frogs, furnishes us far less abundant spoil than that of the first. It is implied in the account itself, in chap. viii. 5, that the waters of Egypt, even in ordinary circumstances, contain many frogs; and from the nature of these waters, we could scarcely imagine it to be otherwise. The statements of travellers, in regard to this, are, however, very scanty. Hasselquist mentions frogs among the Mosaic plagues, which even now visit both natives and foreigners. According to Sonnini, the stagnant waters about Rosetta are filled with thousands of frogs, which make very much noise.

The Third Plague—the כִּנִּים Gnats.

As respects the third plague, it is now generally agreed, that by כִּנִּים, *kinnim*, gnats are meant. These are, even in ordinary years, very troublesome in Egypt. Herodotus, as early as his time, speaks of the great trouble which the gnats cause, and of the precautions which are taken to guard against them. Hartmann observes:—"All travellers speak of these gnats as an ordinary plague of the country. In cool weather they are especially bold. They pursue the men, prevent them from eating, disturb their sleep, and cause swellings, which are sensibly painful." What Sonnini says of these gnats, in

his account of his abode in Rosetta, is of peculiar interest:—"It is asserted that the multitude of gnats with which the streets and the inside of the houses were then filled, owe their origin to this employment (the drying of rice, about the end of October). Indeed, there are fewer of them at other times. After the rice harvest, they go forth in multitudes from the overflowing fields, in which the preceding generation laid their eggs. They come to trouble men ; they make



EGYPTIAN GNAT, MAGNIFIED.

wounds, in order to suck their blood, not less burning than those of the Maringonins of South America." These passages show that the time of the extraordinary public calamities corresponded nearly to that of the extraordinary plague. The first plague, the changing of water to blood, transfers us to the period of the increase of the Nile, the gnats begin to multiply at the end of the inundation.

The Seventh Plague—the Tempest.

The seventh plague was a severe tempest, attended with hail and rain. In the narrative itself—chap. ix. 18—24—it is said that the phenomenon was unexampled only in degree; and it is implied that it is not uncommon in Egypt in a milder form. Other accounts agree with ours in showing, that tempests in Egypt are not unfrequent, and that they in general differ from the one under consider-

ation only in severity. These notices are explanatory of our account insomuch as they represent that tempests are most abundant just at the time in which, according to verse 31, the tempest here described occurred. The accounts of ancient travellers concerning tempests in Egypt, in January and March, are found carefully collected in Nordmeyer, and especially in Hartmann. Coutelle says, "Natural phenomena succeed each other in this land with a constant uniformity. The same winds return regularly at the same time, and continue equally long. In the Delta it does not rain at all in summer, and scarcely at all in winter. We have very seldom seen it rain in Cairo. Rain in Upper Egypt is a wonder. A higher temperature than that designated below, a harder frost, and more copious rains, are extraordinary occurrences." Jomard, upon the climate of Cairo, says, "Rain falls by no means so seldom in Egypt as is commonly asserted. First of all, Lower Egypt must evidently be excepted, as it covers a much more extended surface than the rest of the country, and lies where its greater or less proximity to the sea produces a more variable climate than that of the Said. All phenomena, with the exception of hail and snow, follow there as in other countries which are washed by the Mediterranean Sea. I have several times seen even hail at Alexandria. At Cairo the state of the atmosphere begins to be more settled, and in Upper Egypt it is almost invariable."

CHAPTER X.

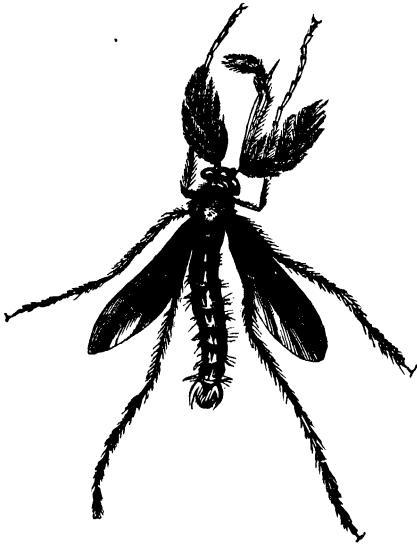
PHARAOH'S HEART STILL HARDENED. ANOTHER APPEAL TO PHARAOH. THE CONFESSION OF PHARAOH. THE LOCUST PLAGUE. THE PLAGUE OF DARKNESS. PHARAOH'S TERMS.

WE now approach the last of the plagues or judgments that were dealt upon Pharaoh, and upon his subjects and his kingdom, because of his own wilful refusal to let the children of Israel go. I explained in the course of previous expository remarks on the chapters that precede this, that "the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart," is an expression obviously intended to denote that the measures which God pursued were productive, not of a softening and subduing, but of a hardening effect upon the mind, heart, and conscience of Pharaoh; that God was the occasion of his heart being hardened, not the cause of it; that he did it through the means that he employed to convince him. Just as the Gospel preached unto us is, if not the savour of life, the savour of death; and yet the God of the Gospel is not to be blamed for these its necessary effects. You will perceive that it is added twice in this chapter after the words, "The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he *would* not let them go." It is not said that he *could* not, which would have been the result, if God by omnipotent power had prevented him; but it is said that he

would not, which shows that the resistance to the will of God was his own volition, and that alone.

God says to Moses, evidently bearing and forbearing with Pharaoh, and with a desire that the means employed should be productive of their just and legitimate effect, "Go into Pharaoh's presence, and tell him to let my people go, in order that they may serve me in the way that you pointed out in the commencement of your intercourse with him." Moses and Aaron then came unto Pharaoh—Moses mighty in action, Aaron eloquent in words—the one the gifted orator, the other the devoted, persistent and holy servant—and they said, "Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?" This reminds us of the just and fair interpretation that I presented of the passage in the previous chapter, where Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron, and said, "I have sinned this time; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked." I showed you that there were certain features in that confession almost significant of genuine repentance; but I noticed that the element of humility, which is always the necessary accompaniment of true repentance, seemed then and there to have been wanting. Now here we find the servants of God expressly declaring that he had refused to humble himself. No confession with the lip is enough without lowliness and humility of heart. No prayer can rise with acceptance from a proud heart; and what Pharaoh needed was not the removal of the judgment, was not simply a sense of danger, or of suffering, or even of death, but that he should humble himself, confess his sin, acknowledge

the sovereignty of God, and submit to his will, and walk in his ways, as he should be pleased to prescribe. This he would not do; and therefore the servants of God were told, and told him, that there would be brought upon him another judgment, that would finish what the hail had begun; that every



THE LOCUST.

green tree, and herb, and fruit, and flower, that the hail, the lightning, and the tempest had spared, would be now consumed by devastating inroads of locusts, which should spread over the land. The picture that is here given is sometimes seen in Eastern countries at the present day. I have read

of travellers, who have witnessed there the inroads of immense bodies of locusts. They have noticed the very air to be darkened by the immense mass, or locust-cloud, and they have heard even the sound of their wings, as they approached the scene of devastation. They have seen them cover the whole earth round about for a great many yards one, two, or even three inches thick ; so that the horses could not pursue their route without treading upon them ; and they have remarked that such a plague, if universal, would be one of the greatest inflictions that could be suffered by any land. Hence the allusion in Scripture, with reference to devastating armies, and the incursions of lawless conquerors, that what was the garden of Eden before is made a wilderness and a desert behind.

This plague evidently made a very deep impression upon Pharaoh, and he was disposed to relent and give way a little ; for, whilst it is said that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh, it is quite obvious that after each plague (and the word "plague," whether derived from the Greek, which is its origin, or the Latin, means a blow), he evidently relented a little ; and was more anxious for terms, and, if it could only be done compatibly with his wounded pride, to come to a close of this very serious and severe treatment. He now proposed that the grown up men should only go away, and leave the mothers and their children behind ; because he felt that when the old slaves were thus got rid of, that would not be a very great loss, since the young slaves would take their place, and that thus his treasury would not be exhausted by their secession. He therefore tried to

come to terms with Moses and Aaron, which terms, like those of an avaricious miser, were the most satisfactory and profitable to himself. When he saw the frightful visitation of the locusts—all that was green devoured, all that was beautiful blasted, the whole land threatened with a plague that would depopulate it by destroying all the grass eaten by the cattle, and every herb for the service of man—he rushed to Moses and Aaron, and said, “I have sinned”—the old story—the mere expression of the lip, and not the feeling of the heart—“against the Lord your God,” as if he implied, “I have nothing to do with him, he is not my God, and I do not owe allegiance to him ; yet I see that he is your God, and that he has great power.” “Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once.” He now almost becomes a Romanist ; for he asks forgiveness of Aaron the priest, instead of seeking it where it could then, and can now be found, from the God of Moses and Aaron.

Then “Moses entreated the Lord. And the Lord turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red Sea. But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart,” that is, this blow, instead of subduing Pharaoh, ended in his being hardened, “so that he *would* not,” not *could* not, “let the children of Israel go.”

The Lord then told his servants to stretch out their hands, and darkness should overspread the land ; and to show Pharaoh that this was miraculous and had a moral significance, as well as a physical calamity, there was light in all the dwellings of the children of Israel. Now this could not be a mist, or

CHAPTER XI.

EXPLANATIONS. THE PROPHECY OF THE LAST PLAGUE. THE FAILURE OF ALL IN SOFTENING THE HEART OF PHARAOH.

You will perceive at once that the first three verses of the chapter I have read, are, not an interpolation by a mere human authority, but an interpolation or a parenthesis clearly and obviously relating to something that had been said before, and to a commission that Moses had received from God on a previous occasion; and you will notice that the 4th verse of this chapter, after making allowance for the parenthesis which recapitulates what evidently had been recorded before, ought strictly to come after the 29th verse of the previous chapter; because in the 28th verse of that chapter, "Pharaoh said unto Moses, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die. And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more." If this chapter which we have read this morning were not connected with the previous chapter, and not evidently a transaction that took place at the very same interview, it would be contradictory to the speech of Moses, "I will see thy face again no more." Evidently after he had uttered that saying, he continued the narrative as it begins in the 4th verse of this 11th chapter,

while he still stood before Pharaoh. After having said, "I will see thy face again no more," that is, "This shall be the last interview," in order that that interview might not be spent, if possible, unprofitably, he announces the last and most consuming judgment that God would pour out upon him and upon his people, if he would not let the children of Israel go. And therefore, the 4th verse of the 11th chapter is the continuation of Moses' statement at the very same interview with Pharaoh, at which he said, "I will see thy face again no more." One proof of this is, that the opening words of the first verse of this chapter might be rendered in the preterpluperfect tense, "And the Lord *had* said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh." It is thus evident that these three verses are divinely interpolated in order to give a full account of the judgments pronounced upon Pharaoh.

Having thus then seen the connection, let us notice that after all the plagues had fallen, and after each had rebounded from Pharaoh's heart like seeds from the hard pavement, like hail upon the flinty rock, God said, "I will add one more judgment, that will have its effect, not indeed in softening his heart, but in emancipating my chosen heritage with a high hand, and an outstretched arm."

There is something very striking in the apparent similarity of the judgments denounced upon Pharaoh, to the plagues given in the Apocalypse, and in the inflictions which God is stated to bring upon a disobedient people in many parts of Scripture. For instance, in the book of Amos, iv. 6—12, God says, in dealing with a people who had transgressed his laws,

“I have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places : yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest : and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city : one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered. So two or three cities wandered unto one city, to drink water ; but they were not satisfied : yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have smitten you with blasting and mildew : when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured them : yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt : your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses ; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils : yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning : yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel : and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel ;” death being the crowning-stroke in the series of plagues denounced upon a guilty people. So in the plagues denounced upon Pharaoh we find that the last is a fatal one—it comes and smites the firstborn, from the monarch upon the throne to the maid-servant who was grinding corn behind the mill.

God says in the 2nd verse, “Speak now in the

ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold." I explained in a previous chapter that the word here translated "borrow," whilst it is so translated in one, or at most, two other passages in Scripture, is generally and justly translated "ask." For instance, the same Hebrew word is used in the 2nd Psalm, where God the Father speaks to the Messiah, and says, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance;" and the word rendered here "borrow," ought to be translated as in the 2nd Psalm, "ask."

Then you will notice that when they asked for these jewels, the Israelites had favour in the eyes of the Egyptians. We read in the previous chapter that Pharaoh pursued a despotic course, and that some of his ministers, courtiers, and people remonstrated with him; but his heart was not only hardened against the administrations of God, but it was also impenetrable to the sound suggestions of his ministers and people. It is plain, therefore, that Pharaoh's career in this matter was not a popular one, and that some of the Egyptians did pity the Israelites: for "the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians;" and the Egyptians, therefore, when the Israelites asked them for jewels of gold and silver, most abundant in that country, freely gave them, partly, it may be, because they pitied them, and partly because they were glad to get rid of them at any price. Josephus says that the Egyptians honoured the Israelites with gifts—some in order to get them to depart quickly, and others on account of neighbourhood and good friend-

ship. So that the historian, Josephus, gives what would suggest itself to any one as the right reason for the Egyptians giving up their property, in order to oblige the Israelites.

Then this last judgment, which is strictly detailed in the next chapter, for this chapter is the prophecy, the next the accomplishment of it, the one the voice, the other the echo, was evidently the most awful and distressing one that fell upon the whole population of the land. If the whole population had been swept away by some desolating flood, or by the earth opening to receive them, there would have been none left to mourn the catastrophe; but when the firstborn child, the hope of the house, the nearest and dearest to the heart, and in whom the whole progress and expansion of the house, whatever was its position or its rank, was centred—when that firstborn one was smitten, from the firstborn child of Pharaoh on the throne to the firstborn child of the humblest menial in his realm, in a night, the universality of this stroke, and its occurring at midnight, when each would be awakened by the calamity that took place, and the neighbour in one house would rush out to seek sympathy from her next neighbour, and meet her next neighbour coming to seek sympathy from her.—I say, the universality of this would make an impression upon the whole population of Egypt that none of the other plagues could effect; and it is therefore alluded to more frequently throughout the Sacred Volume than any other plague recorded in this Book.

But whilst this took place with reference to the Egyptians, God's people were protected in perfect

safety : for we read, " There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more ; but against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue "—even the brute creation should reverently look on—" that ye may know and see, by an irresistible fact, as painful as it is irresistible, that God puts a difference between them that fear him, and them that fear him not."

Blood sprinkled on the lintel alone was the safety of Israel. Not deeds—not race—not anything inside the house—but wholly the blood outside was safety. There might be fears within, but those did not weaken the protection. The blood of Jesus is our safety—and it alone.

Moses then repeats what God had said to him,— " All these thy servants shall come down unto me," that is, unto God, for Moses is only the spokesman, " and bow down themselves unto me," saying, " Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee"—Moses is alluded to there—" and after that I will go out." And then it is said, " Moses went out from Pharaoh in a great anger." Now on first reading this, it would seem as if Moses had got into a passion uncalled for by the circumstances of the case, and unwarrantable in one who professed to be the immediate servant and messenger of the Most High. And yet, if it was so, there is no sin in anger. I believe man was made to be angry, as much as he was made to smile. There is no more sin in being angry than there is in being hungry. The Apostle himself says, " Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." " Be angry, and sin not."

Christianity does not profess to root out human nature ; it only undertakes to sanctify, elevate, ennoble, and improve human nature. The risk of sin in anger is in its degenerating into malice, when it becomes sin. We have a striking evidence of sinless anger in the chapter we shall read this evening (Mark iii.), where it is said, "When Jesus had looked round about on them with anger," but it is beautifully added, "being grieved for the hardness of their hearts ;" as if His anger was mainly sorrow or grief at the hardness of their hearts. Moses had perhaps more of the passion of human nature than the sorrow of a Christian, and he may have felt, as he once spake, unadvisedly and sinfully, for who is he that sinneth not? Yet still there was enough in the conduct of Pharaoh, and in the maltreatment of the children of Israel, to arouse the temper of any man ; and it needed the grace of God mingled with that temper or passion to make it as much pity for a misguided king, as indignation at his atrocious tyranny.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you." Lest you should expect too much from this last plague, I warn you that Pharaoh will not hearken unto you. Now this seems a sort of inexplicable inconsistency. Why should God bid Moses to do things to persuade Pharaoh, when he told Moses all throughout that he would not listen? The answer is, it is ours to do the duties that are assigned by the Most High ; it is God's to determine the results. If every soldier who marched into the field of battle were to say, "What is the use of opposing that mighty force? I know we shall fail," there would be speedy defeat. It is by each feeling that

there is a duty assigned, and having confidence in him who assigns it, that any work will be most efficiently done. God determines results: it is ours to use the means. God metes out the harvest; it is ours to sow the seed. Moses had nothing to do with the effect of what he wrought: he had only to do what was bidden, and to commit the result to Him who judgeth righteously.

CHAPTER XII.

PHARAOH RELENTS. CHILDREN SUFFER FOR PARENTS A FACT IN HISTORY. TRANSUBSTANTIATION. THE SACRIFICE AND FEAST. TRAINING AND TEACHING CHILDREN. BORROWING JEWELS.

WE have seen in the course of successive chapters of the truly interesting Book we have been reading, that one plague after another fell with consuming vengeance upon Pharaoh and those who were associated with him ; that he relented occasionally for a moment, but only to return to his inveterate obstinacy more than ever. At last a plague comes, so desolating in its nature, so sudden, and from the midnight in which it was dealt, so mysterious, that it at once relaxes all the feelings of Pharaoh, dissipates all the obduracy he had shown, and makes him too thankful to get rid of a people in the midst of Egypt, about whose profitableness to his realm he must think no more, and about getting rid of whom in the quickest manner, and with the least mischief to himself, must be now his only consideration.

It has been often said, Does it not seem almost an unjust, not to say were it not irreligious, a cruel thing, that because of the obstinacy of the monarch the poor babes, some of whom were sitting on their

mother's knee, and others having reached no more years than boyhood, should all be smitten with one dread stroke? It is only another page of God's providential dealings with mankind. Even the heathen could say, "The king sins, and the Greeks are punished;" and we find, when the curtain is lifted in the sacred Volume, that national sins committed by national rulers are visited, not only upon them, but also upon the people. It may be unjust in the estimate of some; I believe it to be just, because it is the doing of God; but we are sure that if we cannot see the justice of the procedure, it is not because God is unrighteous, but because we are so blind. At all events, it is not simply a revelation in God's Word, but it is a fact illustrated in the history of every nation upon earth. Read the history of man, and there you have just the echo of the Word and the prophecies of God. It is not a declaration of a principle peculiar to Christianity, but the announcement of a fact embodied in the history of every nation whose annals are accessible to us. And it is perhaps a more merciful law than some imagine. It only makes the responsibility of the parent or ruler more solemn, and is fitted to make the sense of that responsibility deeper, greater, and more lasting.

We read in the commencement of the chapter that this event was so memorable, that the very current and order of the year was to be changed in consequence. The Jewish year began before in September and October; it is now to begin in the months of March and April. God says that the last half of March and the first half of April shall be the commencement of the Jewish year.

The provision here made was that the Israelites and whosoever would, should take a lamb, that lamb being typical and significant of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; that lamb they were to kill, and sprinkle its blood upon the lintel, and wherever the destroying angel saw this, from that house he should reverently retire, holding it and its inmates safe and sacred things. This was not that God required blood sprinkled on the lintel to let his messenger know who were his people, and who were Pharaoh's, but it was to be a typical and significant rite. While it answered the great purpose of distinction for the day, it was to endure as a lasting and expressive lesson-book inculcating a great truth, until the fulness of the times should come, when the Passover, like a dim morning star, should be merged in the splendour of the rising and increasing Sun of Righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ. The fears and terror of the inmates weakened their comfort but not their safety. The blood on the lintel alone was safety. We may have doubts and fears, but these do not dilute the efficacy of Christ's blood. Not the strength of our faith, but the efficacy of his blood, is our safety.

There is one fact about this which is very striking, and which has not been noticed with the usual accuracy of our translators. It is in the 26th verse, where it is said, "And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?" Now in the Hebrew original in this place there is no word for "mean;" and this verse is, literally translated, "What by this service?" or "What is this service?" And the answer that shall

be given is, "It is the sacrifice of the Lord's pass-over." Now have you not in this passage, the meaning of which our translators thoroughly appreciated, though they have not put the word "mean" in italics, as they usually do when they add expletives—have you not here the word "is" used in the sense of "represent?" It is plain that the original language is "is," and the answer is, "It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover;" but yet you see clearly that the idea is, "What mean ye by this service?" and naturally the answer is given, "It means the sacrifice of the Lord's passover." Now then, transfer that idea to the words of our Blessed Lord, when he took bread, and after he had blessed it, he brake it, and the institution of the supper exactly corresponds with this, and said, "This is my body." He meant clearly, "This means my body;" and again, "This cup is the new testament," he meant, "This represents or signifies the new testament." If you ask for the analogy that shows it, you have it here in this chapter. It never could be supposed by an Israelite that when the father said to the child, "This is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover," that he meant to convey the idea that roasted flesh was transubstantiated into a destroying angel passing through Egypt, smiting the firstborn of Pharaoh, and sparing the firstborn of Israel. The child would never dream of such a thing: it was left for the schoolmen of the middle ages, and even for popes, councils, and canons, to suppose such things. The Israelites must have understood "This is," to imply "This means;" just as it is said, "The seven candlesticks are," that is, mean "seven churches." "That Rock

was Christ."—"That Rock meant or signified Christ."

But it will be said, Was there not in this passover a sacrifice; and if the Lord's Supper comes in the place of the passover, may we not infer that the Lord's Supper is a sacrifice too? I answer, No. There were two parts in this passover; there was first the slaughter of the lamb, and the shedding of its blood; and subsequent to that there was the roasting of the lamb, and the eating of its flesh upon the table. There were two parts in the ancient passover; there was the painful or the sacrificial part, and there was the pleasant or the festival part. Well, Jesus is the antitype of the lamb slain; and when Jesus died upon the cross and shed his blood, he took to himself and endured all the painful part, and thus fulfilled all its sacrificial import; and then, the Lord's Supper answers to the joyous feast that succeeded the sacrifice. It is no part of the sacrifice itself, but is a festival based upon it, and commemorating the sacrifice as a finished sacrifice. How beautiful is this! The Jew had the painful, as well as the pleasant part; but in our economy Jesus took all the pain, and bequeathed to us only the pleasure. He endured all the sorrow, and he has given to us to enjoy the glad festival that follows. Hence, the Communion table is of all spots in Christendom the most joyous. If there be sunshine in the sanctuary, it ought to be there; and the idea that prevails so much in some minds of coming to the Lord's table with feelings of awe, terror, dread, dismay, as if it were spread on Mount Sinai, with the thunders of the Law rolling over it, and the flashing of its light-

ning only to illuminate it, is more Jewish than Christian. We are to come to that table as to a glad and joyous festival, commemorating the grandest fact in the universe, the great truth that the Lamb has been slain, that the sacrifice is finished, that its efficacy is in our hearts, and that this festival is the memorial and the pledge that it is so.

We must notice another fact, for in so long a chapter I can only allude to one or two, "And it shall come to pass when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover." Here is the first school that we read of in the ancient Jewish economy. The first teacher was the father or the mother, and the first pupils were the children who were taught. If you want a precedent for schools, here it is. Children are inquisitive; they are meant and made to be so. They will often ask more questions than a parent can answer, but they will often ask questions that a parent should answer; and therefore when they ask what you mean by anything you engage in, you ought always to be ready to give answer for a fact that you do, as well as for the faith that is in you. Parents should not say, "You are too young to learn this." Everything has a part that can be explained to a child, whilst it has darker parts that are not intelligible to an angel; and whatever we can teach it is our duty to render as plain as possible. Lessons that are learned in infancy are often not forgotten in old age. The law is, "Train up a child in the way he should go," not "in the way he would go," as some practically render it, "and when he is old, he will not depart

from it." Some parents, instead of falling back upon their own inconsistency, as the explanation of filial misconduct, blame God's Word. They quote this passage, and then they say that God's Word has failed; whereas, it is their duty that has failed. Again, it is said "Train," not teach only. The gardener is not satisfied with pointing out the course that a vine is to take, he trains it. And so, in all efficient teaching (and I rejoice to say that this idea is prevailing more and more in the public mind than it did some years ago), there must not only be pointing out, but practically exhibiting. There must be giving tone to the conduct, as well as teaching lessons for the memory.

After this dread stroke, when in the silence of midnight, unexpected by the Egyptians, the angel looked into the face of every firstborn one, from Pharaoh's down to the mother's that ground at the mill, and it drooped, and died, "there was a great cry in Egypt." And people, whenever they cannot explain a catastrophe, exaggerate it; and therefore they said, "We be all dead men." "This is but the beginning of an epidemic that will spread throughout Egypt. We see that the cause of it is the obstinacy of our rulers; therefore, let the Israelites be driven out as speedily as possible, for we be all dead men." Pharaoh felt as they felt; for instead of haggling with them, if I may use the expression, like a bargain-maker, as he did before, saying, Leave your children behind you, and then your cattle, he is now only too glad to get rid of them cattle and all, because a judgment was on him too terrible to be repeated, and too severe to be longer borne.

The Israelites marched out, after they kept the passover, and ate of the roasted lamb, in a way not usual with Eastern nations, namely, with their shoes or sandals on, and each with their staff in their hand, ready to take their journey into the promised land. We, too, are pilgrims and strangers looking for a better country; and if we are not to have the pilgrim robe or the pilgrim staff, we ought to have the pilgrim spirit which consists in having our heart where our treasure is, and both in heaven at the right hand of God.

We find next what I need not again explain, that they borrowed from the Egyptians gold and silver. The word "borrow" ought to be translated "ask." I gave you last Sunday the evidence of it in the 2nd Psalm, where we have the same Hebrew verb thus rendered, "*Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance.*" Then it is said that the Egyptians "lent" these jewels to them. The passage strictly translated is, "They caused them to ask of them such things as they required," that is, told them what they would want, and freely gave them, because they were too glad to get rid of them, and no doubt in some cases they gave as tokens of good-will, because they had found them good neighbours, although holding a religion different from their own.

The following illustrations are worth special elucidation :

VERSE 4.

According as the number of the souls.—As to the requisite number necessary to constitute what was termed the "Paschal society," which Moses does not specify, some light

is gathered from the following passage of Josephus (J. W. b. vi. chap. 9, v. 3), "These high priests did so upon the coming of that feast which is called the Passover, when they slay their sacrifices, from the ninth hour till the eleventh; but so that a company of not less than ten belonged to every sacrifice, (for it is not lawful for them to feast singly by themselves;) and many of us are twenty in company!"

VERSE 5.

Without blemish.—Heb. תמים, *tamim*, perfect, *i.e.*, entire, whole, sound, having neither defect nor redundancy of parts, unsoundness of members, or deformity of aspect. See this more fully explained, Lev. xxii. 21—24. This has a typical reference to Christ, who is called, 1 Pet. i. 19, "A lamb without blemish and without spot."

A male of the first year.—Heb. בן שנה, *ben-shanah*, son of a year. A male, as being accounted more excellent than a female, Mal. i. 14; and of the first year, because it retains during that period its lamb-like harmlessness and simplicity. The phrase implies rather a lamb that falls somewhat short of a full year than one that has reached it. It was probably taken at the age when its flesh was most tender and grateful.

VERSE 6.

In the evening.—That is, in the afternoon, between the time of the sun's beginning to decline, which was called the first evening, and that of his setting, which was termed the second. The usual time, doubtless, was the middle point between noon and sunset, or about three o'clock in the afternoon. Thus Josephus, speaking of the Passover: "They slay their sacrifices from the ninth hour (three o'clock.)" Thus also the Talmud: "They slew the daily (evening) sacrifice at the eighth hour and a half (or half-past two), and offered it up at the ninth hour and a half, (or half-past three). But on the eve of the Passover they slew it at the seventh hour and a half (or half-past one), and offered it up at the eighth hour and a half, (or half-past two.)" Maimonides informs us that the paschal lamb was slain and offered up immediately after the usual time of

killing and offering up the evening sacrifice. In like manner, our blessed Lord, who is the "true Passover slain for us," was condemned soon after the sixth hour, John xix. 14, *i. e.*, our twelve at noon, and he died soon after the ninth, Matt. xxvii. 46, 50, *i. e.*, after our three in the afternoon.

VERSE 8.

Roast with fire.—Because it could sooner be made ready by roasting than boiling. This circumstance constituted a marked difference between the Passover lamb and all the other peace-offerings, the flesh of which was usually boiled, in order to be eaten both by the people and the priests as something additional even at the Paschal solemnity. In 2 Chron. xxxv. 13, the two kinds of offering are accurately distinguished. "And they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance, but the other holy offerings sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans."

And unleavened bread.—This also was ordered for the sake of expedition, Deut. xvi. 13; as both Abraham and Lot in preparing a hasty meal for their visitors, caused unleavened cakes to be made. The original term is supposed to be derived from a word signifying to press, squeeze, or compress, and is applied to bread destitute of the fermenting matter, because it has its parts closely compressed together, and becomes what we commonly call heavy. So, on the other hand, our English word "leaven" is formed from the French "levain," which is derived from the verb "lever," to raise up, the effect produced upon doughy leaven, rendering the bread light and spongy. The use of unleavened bread, as a perpetual observance in the Paschal celebration, may have been designed to remind the chosen people of their leaving Egypt in such haste as to be obliged to carry their unleavened dough with them. It is also not unreasonably to be inferred from one or two passages in the New Testament, that a mystical meaning was couched under this circumstance. Leaven is a species of corruption caused by fermentation, and tending to putrefaction. For this reason it is said of our Saviour, Luke xii. 1, "He began to say unto his disciples,

first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy." Paul also, in 1 Cor. v. 7, 8, says, "Purge out therefore the old leaven; for Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

VERSE 38.

A mixed multitude.—Heb. עֵרֶב רַב, *ereb rab*, a great mixture; a multitude composed of strangers, partly Egyptians, and partly natives of other countries, who had been prevailed upon by the miracles wrought in behalf of the Israelites, and from other motives, to embark with them in the present enterprise of leaving Egypt. Thus, Zech. viii. 23, "In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." It can hardly be supposed, however, that the major part of them were prompted by considerations so creditable to their piety. Self-interest was most likely the moving spring with the great mass. Some of them were probably Egyptians of the poorer class, who were in hopes to better their condition in some way, or had other good reasons for leaving Egypt. Others were, perhaps, foreign slaves, belonging both to the Hebrews and Egyptians, who were glad to take the opportunity of escaping with the Israelites, others again a mere rude, restless mob, a company of hangers-on, that followed the crowd, they scarcely knew why, perhaps made up of such vagabonds, adventurers, and debtors as could no longer stay safely in Egypt. Whoever or whatever they were, the Israelites were no better for their presence, and, like thousands in all ages, that turn their faces towards Zion, and run well for a time, when they came to experience a little of the hardships of the way, they quitted the people of God and returned to Egypt.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GREAT EXODUS. NUMBERS OF THE EMIGRANTS. THE
MIRACULOUS NATURE OF THE EXODUS. THE FIRST-BORN.
UNLEAVENED BREAD. WRITTEN TEXTS. GOD'S DISCIPLINE.
JOSEPH'S BONES.

HERE we have next to the resurrection of our Lord from the grave the most impressive exodus that ever occurred in the annals of mankind. We have a whole people redeemed by a special miracle, a miracle, however, that unfolded the great idea that was needed to be impressed upon all, that without shedding of blood, without the Passover's sacrifice slain, there was no remission of sin. We have this people brought out by a high hand and an outstretched arm from the bondage, wretchedness, and idolatry of Egypt, and marched through the wilderness amid shining miracles, until at last they were planted in the land of Canaan according to the promise of God.

It appears that 600,000 men able to bear arms went forth in this exodus from Egypt; and if we may at all judge from the multitude that always follows in the train of an eastern army, where the camp followers are far more numerous than the army itself, we may very well imagine that a very large body of the Hebrew population accompanied the upwards of half a million of fighting men. Allowing

that for every man capable to bear arms there were two old and two young, besides the females and children, we may estimate that a population exceeding the population of London three millions, or two millions and a half, rose in the land of Egypt at once, and emerged from it into the wilderness, with their faces Zionward, and their trust in the Lord God of Abraham. Now, one can see that nothing but a special miracle of protecting Omnipotence could have enabled such a multitude to rise, and to carry with them things suitable for so long, perilous, and unknown a journey. And I cannot conceive that Moses could be otherwise than directed by the Spirit of God, when he made the experiment. No man in his senses would have made such an attempt, unless there had been an Omnipotent Power to go with him, and an Omniscient Presence to direct him; and the very fact that a Hebrew shepherd, brought up for forty years in the court of Pharaoh, afterwards for forty years a shepherd on the hills, and afterwards doubted and despised by his people; the very fact that he marched two millions and a half of craven, spiritless slaves out of Egypt, is an evidence that he had a light more than human, and a presence that was Divine. We know that such was the case, and that he undertook this great work, because he had the command and promise of the omnipotent Deliverer.

In the former chapter we read of the illustration of Christ our Passover sacrificed for us, corresponding to the Good Friday of Christians. We read now of the very next act, which was, no doubt, typical of a yet greater and grander one. I never can conceive

that all these historical facts that are recorded here were accidental events in the chapter of things. I believe that they were prefigurations of good things to come, and that there was not a fact in the history of Israel that had not then, and has not now, a counterpart and an illustration in the experience of the people of God. The first thing that was to be done was to sanctify the first-born of every creature, and to keep that holy and sacred for ever. Hence, the word "first-born" in the Scriptures always denotes the most excellent thing; and in all the usages of nations the first-born is still the heir, and the pre-eminent one, as if a shadow of God's Divine institution still lingered amid nations that know not the truths of the Gospel. And in order to show that we have our first-born children, and the first-born cattle, and the best of everything that we have, not by right, but by a gratuitous tenure, we have it at the expense of sacrifice. It was to be had at the expense of the sacrifice of a lamb slain for that purpose amongst the Jews; and we have it now as the result of the sacrifice of Christ our passover. We are not original proprietors, but stewards. What we have is not our own, except for use, and we are answerable, he that has little, and he that has much, for the use or abuse of it. We are not our own, and we are not redeemed with gold, or silver, or any such corruptible thing, but with the blood of a lamb without spot or blemish.

Then they were promised that God would bring them into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which was Palestine, the mark of which

would be, "flowing with milk and honey," that is, the choicest things taken as a representation of all the rest. And it is said that this service of unleavened bread subsequent to the slaughter of the lamb should be observed as a memorial for all generations. The reason of the use of unleavened bread was not that there was anything in it that connected the Jewish mind with the fact it commemorated, but it was just an arbitrary sign appointed to be for ever associated with this deliverance. Whenever the Jew ate the unleavened bread, he thought of the origin of it. Just as in the rainbow appointed at the flood, there was nothing in it connected with the deluge, but it became by God's consecration the symbol that reminds us of it. So in bread and wine, there is nothing necessarily connected with the death of Christ, but by God's association of these elements with it, they become significant, and point back to that great and blessed event.

We then read that when their children should ask them, when they came into the promised land, what they meant by all this—it is in the original Hebrew, "What this?" which plainly we are to interpret, "What means this?" just as "This is my body" means "This represents my body"—when they asked what they meant by this, the answer of the parent should be, "By strength of hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage." You see here, as I mentioned on the previous chapter, the provision that the school shall always subsist in the family, that the teacher and the taught shall be a relation reciprocated and sustained there. It assumes the

curiosity and inquisitiveness of the young, and it insists upon the duty of the parent to gratify that curiosity by explaining Divine truths, facts, and institutions, as they ought to be explained.

And so important were all these things, that God says, they shall be like a token stamped upon the hand, and so present to them, that they shall be like the phylacteries, or pieces of parchment, hanging over the forehead, and between the eyes. The Pharisees carried this out literally, but evidently it is the spirit and not the parchment of it that was obligatory upon God's people.

"God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt." Now you might say, could not God, who could miraculously lead them out of Egypt, and feed them, and make a pillar of fire guide them through the darkness of the night, have armed their hearts with courage enough, and their weapons with success enough, to destroy the Philistines? Why should he lead them by a circuitous, and not by a straight route into Canaan? If you will trace upon any of the maps in Bagster's Bible the route from Egypt into Canaan, you will find that it was purposely and deliberately circuitous. And if you ask why, the same answer, perhaps, must be rendered that you must give when you ask, "Why have I been led to my present position by a route so circuitous? Why have I reached my present relationship, my present state, by so circuitous a route? The answer is, that you

never could have reached it by a straighter one, God knows best what is, not the nearest, but the surest way and which is most for your good and for his glory. In the beautiful language of the Prophet, He leads the blind by a way that they know not. It is our business to look at the pillar of cloud by day, and at the pillar of fire by night. We are to run the race "set before us." We did not set it before ourselves, God set it before us. Whether it be circuitous or straight, long or short, rough or smooth, we are to run the race set before us with only one anxiety—"looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith." The Israelites in their exodus from Egypt were to pursue their route through the wilderness, not enquiring, nor complaining, whether it was circuitous or straight, but looking to the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night. If we can only look at the right guide, lean upon the right arm, contemplate the right object, all the rest should never trouble us. As our day is, our strength shall be. "My grace is sufficient for thee."

But there is another idea suggested by this, and it is a very important one, that on God's part there never is a profusion of miracles; open a chapter of the Bollandists, or the annals of the beatification and canonization of the Romish saints, and there is such a profusion of miracles, that they are sparkling all day and all night, until you are weary of reading of them. But in God's Word you never find a miracle unless a miracle be actually required; and when the miracle is done, it carries its own majestic credentials upon its own brow; there can be no

doubt about it. Now, you will notice here that God treated the men as rational, responsible, intelligent beings. If it had been all miracles, man might as well have been an automaton; but as man was a responsible creature, that God wished to train, to indoctrinate, to shape and mould after his own Divine model, God dealt with him as a rational being, and only stepped in when there was absolute necessity for it. Even a heathen poet could say

"Nec Deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus."

"Never should a God step in unless there be a difficulty worthy of the interposition of a God." That is acted upon throughout the whole of Scripture. God never steps in with supernatural power, except when the natural is at its wits' end. God was training a race of craven, spiritless, broken-hearted slaves. He would not substitute for themselves Himself; but he would school them, as a nurse leads a child, helping it only when it is about to fall. How beautiful is this thought, that the Great Father should thus bend over his family as a mother watches her infant child, helping it only when it needs it, knowing that to help it too often would be to frustrate what she has in view, as not to help it at all would be to expose it to danger. God deals with his people, too, according to their growth. He gives a dispensation to one state that he does not give to another. He regards men as progressive creatures, and fits his dealings and dispensations accordingly.

It is said that they "went up harnessed out of the

land of Egypt," that is, in companies, or battalions, so many abreast. It does not mean that they were armed with weapons for battle.

In the 19th verse there is a reference to Joseph's bidding his brethren swear that they would carry his bones out of Egypt into Canaan. You see how they recollected the good and great patriarch's dying request. And what did Joseph mean by it? It was a pledge to the slaves in Egypt that they would yet be in Canaan; it was a declaration that though his bones might rest for a season in the tombs of the Pharaohs, his heart beat towards Canaan. It is a lesson to us that this is not our rest, that there remaineth a Canaan, a true rest, for the people of God. It was not a mere piece of caprice, but a suggestive, prefigurative and significant fact, showing that Joseph looked forward to that day when his bones, like the bones of his nation in the valley seen by Ezekiel, should again be clothed in flesh, and come bone to bone, and he should rise again.

We see next, God's guidance of the people by a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. We can form an idea of the gigantic size of this phenomenon by the fact, that two millions and a half of people had to see it. You can conceive what an immense space of ground this number must have covered. I believe that, when the first ranks had reached the Red sea, the last had hardly escaped from Egypt. The shape of this pillar is supposed to have been like ascending smoke; and mathematicians might easily calculate the height it must have risen to, in order to be seen by all this mass of

people. One may suppose that it must have risen nearly a mile into the skies. I shall take another opportunity of explaining that that pillar was the presence of God which afterwards rested on the ark. It was called the Shechinah, from a Hebrew verb meaning "to dwell;" and we can see that it was the great type of the Incarnation of the Son of God.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ROUTE OUT OF EGYPT. THE RED SEA. DESPAIR OF THE ISRAELITES. HEROISM. SLAVERY. MOSES PRAYS. GOD REPLIES. PILLAR OF FIRE. SHECHAN. THE DIVIDING OF THE SEA. DESTRUCTION OF PHARAOH.

THE chapter I have read records one of the most stupendous miracles in the whole annals of the Christian history. We read that Pharaoh so far submitted, when the death of the first-born struck every heart with terror and dismay, that he let the Israelites go out a few days, as he thought, into the wilderness, in order to sacrifice; in the hope, upon his part, that after they had done so they would return to the brick-kilns, and continue the productive slaves of Pharaoh and of Egypt. But when word came, that the Israelites had not simply gone out for a holiday, but had begun their final exodus from Egypt, with their faces towards the land of Canaan; and when he heard that they had been directed, not by the straight route that seemed to man the nearest, but by the route that God knew to be best;—just as it is still: for what we think the best way to the accomplishment of an end is not always so; and it is well that God sometimes leads the blind by a way they know not, and brings

them to the result by a route unexpected and incomprehensible to them, but in the end most for their good and for His glory—he determined to pursue them. It appears that the Israelites encamped upon the west side of the Red Sea, some twenty or thirty miles, at the very lowest, below what is now called Suez; and if any one will look at their position there, especially if acquainted with the geological and geographical structure of the country, he will see that they were literally “entangled in the land.” And when Pharaoh heard this joyous news, that a mass of people, amounting, as we have seen, to about the population of London—two millions and a-half—with their baggage and their waggons, containing, as they thought, nutriment for a few days in the desert, had got into a sort of Khybar Pass, if one might so call it, with no boats, or bridges, or other means of crossing the sea, he determined to go forth with all the might of Egypt, and to come upon them when they least expected it, and between his soldiers and the sea, to exterminate the slaves, who, under the pretext of enjoying a holiday, had bade a final farewell to Egypt.

The Israelites, when they came into this position, were extremely overwhelmed by a sense of the difficulties that environed them, and they showed the most craven and cowardly spirit, as well as hearts that had lost all confidence in the Lord God of Israel.

When they heard the roar and saw the white crests of the multitudinous waves before them, and heard the tramp of the steeds, and the rush of the chariots of Pharaoh behind them, and when they looked up at the enveloping mountains that they could not

climb, they gave up all for lost. Instead of looking to the pillar of cloud that had guided them, as they ought to have done; instead of remembering that the God who saved them out of Egypt was their God still, they "cried out unto the Lord, and they said unto Moses," in language that must have been painful to him, but that did not depress so wise, so intrepid, and so inspired a leader, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" Well, suppose it had come to that, better have died free men in the desert, than have pined a few years longer as slaves in Egypt.

Heathen men would have felt this; and it was a deep shame and a great sin for a number of Hebrews, far more enlightened, to utter such a remonstrance to a leader who had sacrificed so much for their sakes. But mark the firmness of this great leader. When they said so, Moses said to them, "Fear ye not." What calmness! He loses not his self-possession, he does not break forth into passionate remonstrance or reply, but with a calm that indicated an inspiration that was Divine, he said, "Fear ye not, stand still"—do not lose your self-possession—"and see," what I know will pass before you in all its magnificence and triumph, "the salvation of the Lord." It is wonderful, even in this world, apart from the inspiration that was here, how much in an army, or a navy, the whole issue depends upon the calmness, the self-possession, the magnanimity, the fearlessness of one. Let the leader tremble and all is gone. Let him remain, like Moses, firm, and the very spectacle of strength is strength, the sight of a hero gives heroism, confidence displayed by a leader

puts confidence in the hearts of those who follow him.

One may remark, as an excuse for the Hebrews on this occasion, that slavery had broken their hearts; and we see here in their faltering, and in their chiding of Moses, how thoroughly their spirits had been broken by slavery. We often say, the slaves are so bad that they are not fit to be emancipated; but it was slavery that made them bad; and to plead the sin that destroys, as a reason for ceasing to deliver, would not be just. These were slaves in Egypt; they had lost all the dignity of free men, and all sense of independence; and they showed that they were neither fit to fight, nor fit to take this exodus, nor to enjoy, as they could not realize, their position, till God taught them subsequently better.

God said unto Moses, "Wherefore criest thou unto me?" It is plain, that while Moses spoke with such calmness and self-possession to the agitated and terrified crowd, his heart was busy meanwhile in fervent and earnest prayer to God. It is not said here that he prayed, but God's reply, "Wherefore criest thou to me?" is evidence that the heart of Moses was praying whilst his lips were uttering encouragement to the people. There is a time for prayer, and a time for action; and this shows that time may be spent in the one that should be spent in the other. There is a time to seek the grace and guidance that we need, but there is a time also to draw upon the capital that God has given us, and turn it to good account. Moses here, instead of continuing to pray, was told to begin to act, "Lift

thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it."

Here you will notice how this pillar of cloud by day, which must have extended upwards of a mile into the air, in order to be seen by so many people, was a blazing fire by night. This pillar is sometimes called "the angel of God," sometimes "God," and sometimes "the Lord;" and this evidently shows that it was a symbol or type of our Blessed Redeemer, and that He was in it: for when the temple was built, we read that the cloud or the glory came and rested upon the mercy seat; and we read, too, that Jesus dwelt in the flesh, or literally "shechinaed" in the flesh. The pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, when it settled between the cherubim, as a perpetual bright light, and token of the presence of God in the temple, was named the "shechinah," so called from the Hebrew verb shachan, which meant "to dwell." Our Lord was thus the "shechinah" incarnate; and when the Bible speaks of his second coming, it speaks of his coming "in the cloud." The Apostles were told that he would come in like manner as they had seen him go. So that this pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, seems to have been the dwelling place, or the place of special manifestation of God our Saviour before he became man, and was incarnate.

I need not explain to you the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, on which I have so often spoken already.

We then read that "Moses stretched out his hand over the sea: and the Lord caused the sea to go

back by a strong east wind." If you will look at the maps that describe the Red sea, especially as the Arabian desert was divided in ancient times, you will notice that the Israelites were on the left side of the sea. The sea runs north and south ; the Israelites were upon the west side of it ; the east wind, therefore, must have penetrated the sea, and cut it like a knife. If the wind had come from the north, it would have driven the sea towards the main ocean, but by coming from the east it cut the sea like a sword. This shows how specially miraculous it was. The effect was not produced by the waters subsiding or receding ; but the effect of it was dividing the waters into two. It blew right against the Israelites ; and if it had been a natural wind, blowing, as we say, accidentally, it would have blown the whole volume of the waters of the Red Sea over the hosts of Israel, and thus have drowned them ; but as it blew across the water, it cut the sea in two, as with a knife, and the water stood, as if it had been ice, in solid majestic walls on each side, when the Israelites passed through. What an impression must have thrilled every heart, when the intrepid leader stretched forth his rod, having in itself no virtue, except God's command, and the great sea waves listened to the bidding of Him who made them, as if they had been children gathering round a loving mother's knee to do her will without a moment's hesitation.

We read that when they did so, the Israelites marched through, and the Egyptians determined to follow in pursuit. Then Moses, at the command of God, stretched out his rod upon the sea again, after

the Egyptians had passed into the middle of it; and the same water that divided, and stood up, and opened a promenade for the people of God, collapsed, and became a grave to their Egyptian pursuers.

Let us here notice the calmness with which this is recorded. If this were the writing of an uninspired man, there would be a great many interjections, and marks of astonishment, as if conscious that he was recording some grand thing; but the very quietness of the words here that disclose so stupendous a miracle is to me a proof that there was in it not the guidance of the human, but the inspiration of the Divine.

We read, then, that the Israelites not only passed through dry-shod, and reached the opposite shore in safety, but that they were also permitted to see the Egyptians dead upon the banks. Surely, after such a wonder as this, after such a clearly Divine interposition, there was no more murmuring. Surely, surely, they never lost confidence in such a God as this. Alas for poor human nature, they murmured and repined again and again; disbelieved the God that redeemed them, and presented a perfect portrait of what you and I are, if it were not for the grace of God.

The Red sea occupies a basin, in general deep and rocky, and extends about 1160 miles in length from north to south, with a mean breadth which may be stated at 120 miles. Throughout this great extent it does not receive the waters of a single river. The

western coast is of a bolder character, and has a greater depth of water than the eastern. The gulf abounds in sunken rocks, sand banks, and small islands, together with numerous coral-reefs, which in some places rise above the water to the height of ten fathoms. The bottom is covered abundantly with the same substance, as well as with marine plants, which in calm weather give that appearance of submarine forests and verdant meadows to which the sea probably owes its Hebrew name of Yam Suph, as well as its present Arab name of Bahr Souf. Burckhardt observes, that the coral is red in the inlet of Akaba, and white in that of Suez. The remarkably beautiful appearance which this sea exhibits has attracted notice in all ages ; and among its other characteristics, the far more than ordinary phosphorescence of its waters has been mentioned with peculiar admiration. The width of the gulf contracts towards its extremities, and at its mouth is considerably narrower than in any other part. The strait of Bab-el-Mandel is there formed, and does not exceed fourteen miles in breadth ; beside which it is divided, at the distance of three miles from the Arabian shore, by the island of Perim. The high land of Africa and the peak of Azab give a remarkably bold appearance to the shore in this part. At its northern extremity the Red sea separates into two minor gulfs or inlets, which enclose between them the peninsula of Sinai. The easternmost of these is that of Akaba or Ailah, called by the Greeks and Romans Allanites ; this is only about half the extent of the other, and is rendered very dangerous by shoals and coral-reefs. The westernmost gulf is called the gulf of Suez,

anciently, Heeropolites: the ancient and modern names of both inlets being from towns that formerly did, or do now, stand at their extremities. It is the latter, the western gulf, which was crossed by the Hebrews. It is about 160 miles in length, with a mean breadth of about thirty miles, narrowing very much at its northern extremity, The mean depth of its water is from nine to fourteen fathoms, with a sandy bottom; and it is of much safer navigation than the other. There are many indications which place it beyond a doubt that the Arabian gulf was formerly much more extensive and deeper than at present. One of the most certain proofs of this is, that cities, which were formerly mentioned as sea-ports, are now considerably inland. This is particularly the case in the gulf of Suez, where the shore is unusually low. That the sea formerly extended more northward than at present there is much reason to conclude, not only from the marine appearances of the now dry soil, but from this fact, among others, that Kolsoum, which was formerly a port, is now three-quarters of a mile inland. There is certainly nothing in the appearance of the soil about the Isthmus of Suez to discountenance the hypothesis that the Red sea was formerly no other than a strait uniting the Mediterranean with the Indian ocean; and that the isthmus which is now interposed between the Red sea and the Mediterranean was formed by drifts of sand from the adjoining deserts. This, however, is an hypothesis: but there is nothing hypothetical in the statement that the gulf once extended more to the north than at present; and this fact is of importance, because it enables us to

see that nothing less than a miraculous interposition of the Divine power could have enabled the Israelites to cross the bay even at the highest of the points which has been selected by those who, perhaps, were influenced by the wish to diminish the force of the miracle, or to account for it on natural principles.

CHAPTER XV.

SONG OF MOSES. MURMURING. THE BITTER WATER. THE BRANCH.

IN the chapter that precedes the one we have read we had the sublime and impressive record of the complete overthrow of the pursuing hosts and chariots of Pharaoh, and of the magnificent exodus, or escape, of the children of Israel along the channel of the divided Red Sea dry-shod, and without the loss of a single child, or injury to one individual. And, at the close of such a deliverance, what becomes a Christian people? Surely, surely, thanksgiving and song. But who was the Being to whom Miriam, and Moses, and the children of Israel, lifted up this magnificent hallelujah, perhaps the most magnificent on record? It was not to Moses, the earthly deliverer, it was not to the spirit of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, or the sainted ones that preceded them; it was only to the Lord God: for he says, "I will sing unto Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

This song is three hundred years older than any song or anthem that exists in any language whatever; and, though so old as to date, there is no hymn of

praise composed in ancient times, and one may add, in modern times, that in regard of poetic merit, of true beauty, of deep, rich, and suggestive expression, can for one moment be compared with it. The master musician of the world has exhausted all his genius in trying to embody in strains of music what is so magnificently expressed in human speech. Some of the figures almost speak. It is scarcely reading, it is almost hearing. "They sank as a stone." "With the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea." The language is most expressive of the reality, and throughout indicates that it was no accidental occurrence, no lucky wind, or extreme ebb-tide, but an actual miracle that indeed can be proved by geographical inspection, by historical evidence, and by the Scripture's own account, to have been the result of the interposing omnipotent power of God.

And when the children of Israel thus sing, they say that this same God, who has thus triumphed gloriously, is "our strength and our song, and he is become our salvation." "He is," says one, "my God," and all say, "He is our God, and our Lord."

He says in the 3rd verse, "The Lord is a man of war." That expression is a Hebraism. "A man of words" means an eloquent man; "a man of strength" means a powerful man; "a man of war" means one who is mighty in battle, and against whom victory is impossible, should he be pleased to will it the contrary.

It then describes what God did: "Pharaoh's

chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone," unable to extricate themselves any more than a stone is able to lighten its weight, and rise to the surface of the water.

But why this triumph over Pharaoh? It was not that God had pleasure in Pharaoh's ruin, but that he had a purpose of Israel's deliverance. I am sure any one who has listened to the chapters we have read describing God's bearing and forbearing dealings towards Pharaoh, the efforts made to convince him, and the miracles that were wrought before him, must come to the conclusion that one so reprobate, so infatuated, so obstinate before God, and so cruel to man, met with that doom which the retributive providence of God itself seems to demand.

Then he describes the scene, how, "with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together;" and then, the still irrepressible pride of Pharaoh, "The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them;" but in answer to all this, "Thou didst blow with thy wind; the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?" It was this very text that Queen Elizabeth had inscribed upon the coins that were struck in her reign, to commemorate the remarkable defeat of the Spanish Armada, and the deliverance of this great land from the instruments of torture with which the ships were laden, for purposes of wickedness and crime peculiar to Rome. She struck on her commemorative medals, "The

Lord blew with his winds, and they were scattered." We may depend upon it, my dear friends, that it is because in this land God has his people, and because, with all its faults, there is in it a deeper and wider spread of true religion than elsewhere, that we have been so sheltered and so preserved during so many years.

You remember that, in the Book of Revelation, harpers are represented as standing upon a sea of glass, singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb; showing that this song of Moses shall mingle at the last day with the song of the Lamb, and constitute one grand anthem of praise to God for having delivered Jew and Gentile not only from Pharaoh and from Egypt, but from sin, Satan, and the world. You remember, also, that I told you how Mr. Elliott, in his *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, very satisfactorily shows that that event probably refers to this country during the last sixty or seventy years of its history, when the flame of fire and war swept all Europe; and this country, so far from being visited by these judgments, began its Bible Societies, Missionary Societies, and Tract Societies. Whilst the nations on the continent of Europe were scourged and smitten most awfully, the people of this country only touched their harps with more joyous fingers, and sung a song of praise to that God who had shielded us, and been our refuge and defence.

We read that when Moses had finished his hymn, Miriam, that is the Hebrew rendering of the Greek word *Μαρία*, and the English name "Mary," "the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel," that is, a sort of small drum, "in her hand, and all the

women went out after her, with timbrels and with dances." When the roll of the deep bass had ceased, the beautiful and more brilliant trebles began, "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

"So," it is said, "Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur." But, alas! alas! for your heart and mine, we no sooner get mercies, and thank God for them, than we forget them; and when a difficulty comes we did not anticipate, we fancy that the God who delivered us from the Red Sea is unable to give us a little fresh water to satisfy our thirst. These very children of Israel, so stupendously and magnificently delivered, and so thankful for it, three days afterwards, when they had crossed the sea, and gone into the desert, broke out in passionate recriminations against Moses, for what surely he was not to blame, for he showed that he had a Divine call to lead them forth, and forgot what God was able to do, and said, "What shall we drink?" Moses, the meek legislator and leader of his people, did not reply in recriminating language, but ever mindful that a soft answer best turneth away wrath, and not forgetting whose he was, and in whom was his help, "cried unto the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree, which, when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet."

It is noticed in "Bartlett's Forty Days in the Desert," that there is a well still called the well of Moses, that may fairly be concluded, by the progress of the children of Israel each day, to be the very well that

they came to. It is just about three days' quiet journey from the part of the Red sea at which the Israelites must have landed when they crossed it. And he tasted the water, and found that they were excessively offensive to the taste. Some portion of the water was analyzed by a chemist, and he stated that what he discovered chiefly in it was sulphate of lime. The waters are plentiful, but extremely bitter to the taste. He enquired of the natives of the desert whether there was any tree which, if cast into the water, would make it sweet; but they had no recollection of such a thing by tradition, nor did they know of any tree fitted to do it. The fact is, the use of the branch by Moses was not because there was any virtue in it, but because God always accompanies a miracle by a significant sign of it. The miracles of Jesus were always preceded by something very simple, not in itself having any virtue, but merely to show that it was his doing. He touched the ears of the deaf, the eyes of the blind, and the tongues of the dumb, and they were healed. So here, God bade Moses cast a branch into the water merely to show the connection between God the cause, and the result, not because there was any virtue in the branch. And then he makes the miracle the basis of a new lesson, "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have put upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth all thy diseases, pardoneth all thy sins, reneweth thy youth like the eagle's, and crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercy."

Let us, my dear friends, thank God for all our deliverances ; let us never forget that his arm is not shortened that it cannot save ; and that He who has delivered us in so many perils in the past, is able and willing to deliver us in all that may betide us in the future.

CHAPTER XVI.

MURMURING FOR BREAD. GOD'S MERCY AND GOODNESS. MEANING OF MANNA. PECULIARITIES IN THE MIRACLES. THE SABBATH.

It appears after the chapter which we read last Lord's-day morning, that when on their murmuring because of the bitterness of the water in the well they arrived at, they had no sooner got that want supplied in mercy, and not in judgment, than they began, like human nature still in all its phases, to murmur that they had not the enjoyment of all that was possible, as well as all that was desirable.

They arrived, it seems, at the wilderness of Zin, as it ought more properly to be called, the wilderness stretching north-east from the sea which they had crossed, on the 15th day of the second month after their exodus from the land of Egypt; and there we read, "the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron," upon this ground, that they had not a supply of the bread that they needed, or at least of the sort of food that was palatable to their taste; and they said in a most craven and criminal manner, "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we

did eat bread to the full ;” that is, they said they preferred the gratification of appetite, even in degradation, to the safety of the soul and the enjoyment of freedom. They would rather be without God, with plenty to eat, than be the friends and heirs of God, and suffer a little temporary inconvenience. But how often is the same principle developed, fulfilled, and acted on, amongst us, and the solemn and impressive testimony forgotten, “What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world”—not only bread for a day, but the whole world—“and lose his own soul?”

Now mark, after this, an instance of the great mercy and forbearance of God, when least deserved. They murmured, rebelled, remonstrated, regretted that they had taken a single step in what they knew to be the right direction ; but God, instead of judging them as he might have done, and visiting them for their transgressions, as they most richly deserved, graciously said, “Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you.” He pardoneth our sins. Where sin abounds, grace doth much more abound. He comes over the mountains of our transgressions, and shows himself gracious to us in spite of them.

Then Moses and Aaron said to them, “Why should you murmur against us? We are but the instruments ; we have a duty to discharge, a mission to fulfil ; we have done it to the letter ; we are but the instruments in God’s hands. Do not murmur against us as if we were the cause of this momentary inconvenience ; but see if it be not the doing of that God who has done all so beneficently in the past, and who will never do anything that will

permanently injure you in the course of the future. Your murmuring is not against us, but against the Lord."

And immediately the Lord told Moses and Aaron to come near to him, and hear him; and the glory of the Lord that shone from the pillar as fire by night, and that appeared in the same pillar as a cloud by day, was that tabernacle or sanctuary, out of which God spake, and promised mercies and blessings to the children of Israel. Then it came to pass that there descended from heaven, first the dew of the morning, and after that dew had evaporated by the sun's heat, there lay round about a small hoar frost upon the ground, like, as it is described in another passage, "coriander seed, white; and the taste of it," as they afterwards proved, "was like wafers made with honey."

The children of Israel said, "It is manna." This is a very unfortunate translation, and is not at all the meaning of the original. The Hebrew word which our translators have rendered "It is manna," is *Man-hu?* and the direct translation of that is, "What is it?" You can see the absurdity of our translation in this case by the very succeeding words; for they first say, "It is manna," and then it is added, "for they wist not what it was." How could they know it was manna, if they did not know what it was? The passage itself is so palpable a contradiction, that one can see there is something wrong. The meaning of the original is, that the children of Israel, surprised by so extraordinary a phenomenon, exclaimed, partly out of wonder, and partly out of a desire to be informed, "What is

this?" *Man-hu?* "And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat;" and from the interrogatory, *Man-hu?* "What is it?" it came to be called "Manna." So that wherever the word "Manna" occurs, you have an interrogation made a positive or affirmation, and turned into the name of the substance that fed the children of Israel throughout the desert.

We then read the record of the nature of this food, and the way in which it was to be used. Some of the children of Israel gathered more, and some less; but by a beautiful providential provision, he who gathered much had nothing over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Is not this realised in a Christian mind, that he who in this world is prospered mightily, finds he has not an excess which he cannot dispose of; and that he who has the grace of God in his heart, having little in this world, finds he has just enough, and so finds in his case the performance of that prayer, "Give me neither poverty nor riches, but feed me with food convenient for me," in the quiet and blessed contentment that finds much in little, and in much nothing over.

Notwithstanding, it is said that Moses told them they must not leave it till the morning. It seems as if that had some connection with the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread." What a beautiful and regulating principle is in that clause! Do not give me bread for to-morrow—I may never see it; nor for yesterday—I do not require it; but give me to-day daily bread. That is the petition of all flesh. It is the petition of the poor, for they are dependent on every day's supply; and it is more the petition of

the rich than we sometimes think, because there are two things requisite in having food ; there is not only the food that we need, but there is the appetite to enjoy it, and to be benefited by it ; and if the poor man has little bread, or not of the best kind, he has generally the healthiest appetite ; and if the rich man has the best bread, he has often the most defective appetite ; and, therefore, rich and poor have need to pray, " Give us not only bread, but health to get nutriment, strength, and vigour from it." Thus, the Israelites had no supply for to-morrow, but plenty for to-day ; and as long as we live in a constant sense of dependence upon Him who satisfieth the wants of all flesh, so long we shall be satisfied.

We read, however, that on the Friday they were to gather a double quantity, because they were not to go out to toil upon the Sabbath day. Now, it has been held by many that the Sabbath is purely a Jewish institution. I hold that the fourth commandment is simply the institution of the Sabbath, not of the day, that Sabbath to be enjoyed upon each seventh day ; but whether the day be the first or the seventh, is for subsequent thought. The essential requirement of the Sabbath is a seventh portion of man's time dedicated to the cultivation of his mind, improvement of his heart and soul, study of Divine things, communion with God, and preparation for glory, happiness, and immortality. The fourth commandment is, " Remember," not the seventh day to keep it holy, but " the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Six days shalt thou work, and then the seventh day, not the seventh in order, but one day in the seven, shall be consecrated and dedicated as the Sabbath of the

Lord. And when it was altered to the first day, it was not repealing the Sabbath and giving another; it was simply lifting the light from the Jewish candlestick, which was the seventh day, to the Christian candlestick, which was the first day. It was not the extinction of the light, but the transference of the light of the Sabbath from one day to the other. I showed on a previous occasion that that transference must either have been to the first day of the week, or the seventh still continued, in order that God's whole law might be kept and honoured; because God's law is as rigidly, "Six days shalt thou labour," as it is, "Thou shalt rest on the seventh day." If any man will not work, he breaks the fourth commandment, just as truly as the man who desecrates the Sabbath day. Well, when Jesus transferred the Sabbath, as we believe he did, to the first day of the week, he must either have transferred it to the first, or have left it on the seventh day, in order that the fourth commandment might be observed. If he had transferred the Sabbath to the fourth day of the week, then once it would have occurred, "Three days shalt thou labour, and the fourth day shalt thou rest;" but by transferring it to the first day of the week there were but two Sabbaths in the fourteen days; and the six days' labour, and the seventh day's rest, were thus perpetuated without the least infraction. Should you ask how we know that the Sabbath was transferred to the first day, I answer, just in the same way as we know that the Apostles were enjoined to write the Scriptures.

You will be told by the members of the Church of Rome that there was no commandment given to the

Apostles to write the truths of the Gospel. We answer that by saying, first, that it is matter of fact that they did write ; and it is also matter of fact that they declare they did write. John says, " These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing ye might have life through his name ; " and the fact that they wrote is the presumption, nay the certainty, that they were inspired to do so ; for if they were not inspired to write, as well as to think, then the Apostles did what was contrary to God's mind, which cannot be admitted. So the Sabbath was observed on the first day of the week, we find from the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles, in the earliest inspired Church. I am not speaking of the ante-Nicene Church, but of the time when the Apostles were living, and directing all ; and the fact that that day was observed for Christian worship is to us a sufficient precedent to warrant us in also doing so. But what I wish to notice here is, that the Sabbath was not a Jewish institution. Many persons say it was part and parcel of the law of Levi ; but here we find the Sabbath observed before the giving of the ten commandments or the rites of Levi ; here we have the Sabbath recognized, not as a thing then first instituted, but as an observance that had been from the beginning ; and though it had been interrupted in Egypt, as in all probability it was, yet the instant they were emancipated from the thralldom of Pharaoh, that instant the Sabbath resumed its place, and was regarded with all its wonted sacredness.

And we find that they who went out to gather manna on the Sabbath expended their strength for

nought, whilst those who gathered double on the Friday, found that they had sufficient on the Sabbath without any working. And you will find still that if you want a horse to do the greatest work, you must give him one day to rest on. Whether the horse rest on the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, or seventh day is of no consequence, but he is entitled to one day out of seven. And you will find that if a man works seven days at the same employment, his life will not last so long, nor will he be able to do his work so well, as if he works only six days. God seems to have struck the institution of the Sabbath into the very nature of man; for we find that there is not a single nation in the world that has not a day of rest. The heathens had weeks of seven days, an artificial division, and evidently the remains of a primitive tradition. And when the French in 1793 tried to have Decades, or a Sabbath on each tenth day, in order to expunge every vestige of Christianity, human nature rose true to its aboriginal instincts, and reverted again to the seventh day, as if man could not live happy or peaceable without the Sabbath-day.

We then read that the children of Israel enjoyed this manna forty years, until they reached the land of Canaan; then it ceased. Means last till the end comes.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE NEAREST WAY. MURMURING. THIRST. DIVINE GOODNESS.
THE ROCK. REPHIDIM. WAR, PRAYER, AND BATTLE. THE
GLORY OF THE VICTORY.

It seems to us at times inexplicable how God should lead his people into difficulties that appear to have accumulated the more nearly they approached the land of promise, which was the burden of all their hopes, and the culminating issue of all their expectations. It would seem that God had some great sanctifying, or at least useful, design in his thus leading the children of Israel, not by the straight route into Canaan from the midst of Egypt, but by a most circuitous one—one so circuitous, so zigzag, that one cannot but infer it must have been so appointed of God for some special and wise purpose. Yet this explains what frequently is the case in individual life. God leads the blind in a way that they know not. What seems to us a round-about way will be found in the end really the nearest; for invariably, not what seems to us, but what God himself strikes out, is the shortest way to any given issue.

We read in the previous chapter that the children of Israel were almost starved for want of bread, and that God in answer to their murmuring prayers, for-

giving the unbelief, and listening to the cry that it embosomed, gave them, or rained upon them, bread from heaven. We now find that they had no sooner been miraculously fed than they were thirsty and needed a miraculous supply of water for drink; and God again stepped in, forgiving the unbelief, and pitying the wants, however sinfully uttered, of his children, and like a beneficent Father, in spite of their sins, he opened his hand and satisfied all their desires. When there was no water to drink in the wilderness of Zin, very near, probably, to Mount Sinai, and in the valley of Rephidim, a very bleak and desert glen, the people, instead of remembering the mercies that had strewed their path in the past, and how often Omnipotence had interposed for them—at one time by means of a branch making bitter water sweet—at another time opening the great deep itself, and making it a promenade for his people, whilst it was a grave for his foes; and again, raining down manna from the very clouds of heaven, rather than that his own should want for a little bread—instead of thinking that this good God, whose beneficence was only equalled by his omnipotence, would again surely interpose, and give them water, they fell upon Moses, and asked him to give them water to drink, as if he were God. The people went to the priest, instead of to the God of the priest; they looked to the instrument instead of raising their hearts beyond him, and exercising the privilege of asking a supply from the Blessed Master. They said to Moses, “Give us water that we may drink.” And Moses said unto them, “Why chide ye with me?”—I am not God; why should you be so unbelieving and forgetful?

“Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?” But the people thirsted for water, and, therefore, they still murmured against Moses; and the craven and miserable slaves, bowed down by their thralldom in Egypt, and scarcely able to think a free thought, or to indulge the hopes of free men, said, “Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us, and our children, and our cattle with thirst?” How strange a phenomenon is man! He is inexplicable except in the light of God’s Holy Word; and this picture is not an ancient, obsolete sketch, but it is you, it is I, it is all in the nineteenth century; for human nature is now what human nature was then; and if there be a difference, give the glory to the grace of God, not to the sceptic-prophesied perfectionism and progress of humanity, as it is called.

Moses, instead of answering them severely, cried unto the Lord—the minister at his wits’ end laying low every spirit of retaliation, and showing the meekness that became him—“What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.” One would have expected, if God’s ways had been our ways, that He would have instantly poured out judgments upon such a people; but what an example is there here for a magistrate, or for a ruler! God bears and forbears with them, gives them miracle upon miracle, and ever as they murmured, another miracle still. Truly judgment is his strange work. He might have retaliated, retribution was richly deserved; it was most deeply provoked; but instead of doing so, He whose ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts, said unto Moses, “Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders

of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river" in Egypt, and turned it into blood, "take in thy hand and go. Behold, I will" do what? Not smite the people with the rod that smote all Egypt, and that in my hand is still capable of terrible effect; but I will make the rod that was the executor of judgment upon Egypt to be only the opener of springs and fountains in the rock, for what was death to others shall be life to Israel. "Thou shalt smite the rock," the most unlikely thing, "and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink." How gracious is the Lord! and like us, he is still the same. If He had dealt with us as our sins deserved, we should have been cut off; but He delights in 'mercy. Oh! that we could only realise that beautiful thought, that God has infinitely more than a father's love with omnipotence to wield it, and omniscience to see where, when, and by whom it is most needed; and ever ready, ever waiting, ever willing to bless! I could easily engage to persuade all London that God is a wrathful and revengeful tyrant, ready to punish all men; and I could easily induce them to undergo any penance or process that would be said to propitiate his wrath; but the difficulty is to persuade men that God is a Father, that we are welcome to nestle in his bosom, and to feel the happiness of reconciled children; that He waits to receive us, and continues still to pity us.

We read that Moses, as a memorial of Israel's sins, "called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel." I have been reading the accounts given by travellers



THE ROCK SMITTEN BY MOSES, IN HOREB.

[Exodus xvii.]

of the valley of Rephidim; and I find that they unanimously testify to the presence of a rock remaining geographically just about the place that is indicated in the Scriptural account, and having such unequivocal traces of a miraculous structure and character, that they are all persuaded that it is the very rock that was smitten by the rod of Moses. I quote the leading facts stated by Pocock, Shaw, and Dr. Olin of America. It is a red granite rock, fifteen feet long, ten feet wide, and twelve feet high; there are huge fissures or rents in it, and these fissures are not perpendicular, as we might expect if it had been an accidental rending, but horizontal. They are two or three inches in breadth, and a foot or eighteen inches in length, and of such a strange character, that it is impossible to explain their existence, except upon the supposition that the rock is the very one struck by the rod of Moses. The Bedouins and Arabs in the desert have a tradition respecting it confirmatory of the Scriptural account; and although I would not attach much weight to tradition, yet, when connected with the biblical history, it may have some value. They call the rock "the stone of Moses;" and the last American traveller, Dr. Olin, thus describes it, "This stone made more impression upon me than any natural object claiming to attest a miracle ever did. Had any enlightened geologist, utterly ignorant of the miracle of Moses, passed up this ravine and seen the rock as it now is, he would have declared, though the position of the stone and the present condition of the country around should have opposed any such impression, that strong and long-continued fountains of water

gurgling currents from it and over it. He could not waver in his belief for a moment, so natural and so perfect are the indications. I examined it thoroughly, and if it be a forgery, I am satisfied for my own part that a greater than Michael Angelo designed and executed it. I cannot differ from Shaw's opinion, that neither art nor chance could by any means be concerned in the contrivance of these holes, which formed so many fountains. The more I gazed upon the irregular mouth-like chasms in the rock, the more I felt my scepticism shaken, and at last I could not help asking myself whether it was not a very natural solution of the matter, that this was indeed the rock which Moses struck, that from it the waters gushed forth, and poured their streams down Wady Leja to Wady-esh-Sheikh, along it to Rephidim, where Israel was encamped, perishing with thirst." In Finden's "Illustrations of the Bible," edited by Hartwell Horne, you will find engravings of the rock; and all seem with one consent to concur in the belief that it is the very granite rock that was smitten by the rod of Moses, and that these horizontal fissures, so peculiar in their character, give proof, by their rounded lips, that water must have gushed from them for many years.

We then read that Amalek met Israel, and opposed them. You will observe, that in one case God discomfits his foes by a miracle, and in another case by ordinary means. Now here, when Amalek opposed the children of Israel, God might have caused the earth to swallow them up, just as the ocean swallowed up the Egyptians; but instead of that, he authorised Moses to act the part of intercessor, as

the type of the great Prophet like unto him, that is Christ; and He commanded Joshua to do the part of the warrior, and do battle on behalf of Israel. Some people whom I meet, and others from whom I receive letters, think that war is positively unlawful, and that no Christian nation may in any case engage in it; and I am even told by some, that it is impossible to suppose a soldier to be a Christian. I can conceive nothing more monstrous than such an opinion; for here is an express command from God, when a miracle might have dispensed with the necessity, to Joshua to be a commander-in-chief, and to Moses to be a wrestling pleader on behalf of the victory of the children of Israel. And it is a singular fact that the most distinguished Christians in the New Testament were many of them soldiers. There may, therefore, be in a hero's composition a sensitive and susceptible Christian heart. We know it has been so, and we cannot see why it should not be so. And I am quite sure that the courts of law and chancery have been the scenes of more broken and bleeding hearts than all the battle-fields of Europe. If, therefore, it be sinful to be a soldier, it must be yet no less so to be a lawyer; but it is not sinful to be either, because necessary to the existence of society; each has his duty, and each as a Christian may fulfil it.

From the part that Moses acted in this transaction you can see that the battle depended partly upon the valour of Joshua, but very much upon the interceding or lifting up of the hands of Moses. Now Moses, we are told, was expressly a type of Christ; and this is intended to teach us that in defensive

There is also reference clearly to a state of things which indicates national organisation, and not the nomadic state in which the Israelites were in the desert. And on looking at the chapter which succeeds this, we see plainly that the 19th is the proper continuation of the 17th chapter, and that therefore this 18th chapter is introduced in an earlier place, though it alludes to a later event, from the single fact that Jethro came from among the Amalekites, against whom Joshua waged successful warfare as written in the preceding chapter; and as the historian was speaking of the destruction of the Amalekites, it seemed to him proper and natural to state that Jethro his father-in-law was one of those beautiful exceptions which, like flowers in the wilderness, or like oases in the desert, are found in the worst and most degraded population of the globe. This alone accounts for this episode appearing in this place, containing allusions to events, rites, and ceremonies of subsequent occurrence.

What will strike most readers here is, the beautiful courtesy exhibited by Jethro and Moses when they met together. There is something beautiful in the forms of courtesy, and when they are the channels of real and Christian feeling, they become not only beautiful, but even sacred. There is given also in this chapter some description of primitive hospitality and Christian love, friendship, and goodwill, when Moses took his father-in-law into the tent, his only palace, and set bread before him, and they both thanked God for the mercies of the past, recognized his hand, and expected, as they justly might, his blessing for the future.

We have in Jethro an instance of what is really so rare, though pronounced so plentiful,—intense common sense. The remarks of Jethro are so strikingly sensible, that they commend themselves to every man's mind, and indicate, not only inspiration, but that which is nearer to it than genius, a rightly-balanced, prudent, enlightened, discreet, and reflecting mind. But no doubt Jethro was guided by God to give Moses so prudent and sensible advice; for the language that Jethro employed indicates that he was the subject of deep and experimental acquaintance with the Gospel itself. The first topic of conversation was not earthly subjects at all, but "Moses told his father-in-law all that the Lord had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the Lord delivered them." And then Jethro, hearing the narrative of Moses, broke forth into appropriate song, and said: "Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh. And now I know by experimental proof, what I believed before, that Jehovah is greater than all the idols of the world, and that in those very things where they dealt proudly," that is, where they counted upon success from the greatness of their strength, "there God has had and will have the pre-eminence."

We then read of the advice which Jethro gave to Moses, his son-in-law, which Moses accepted as fitted to lighten the load that was upon his shoulders, and probably to do more substantial justice to the different causes which were submitted to him. Jethro said, "This will wear you away; your phy-

sical strength cannot bear it—getting up early in the morning, and remaining till late at night, having the cares of a general, all the delicate offices of a judge, and all the sacred functions of a priest. It is quite impossible that one man's shoulders can bear the load; and if it be not sinful to distribute it, it is right to see whether it cannot be done." And therefore, "the old man eloquent" with large experience, and wisdom from on high to direct him, said, "Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, as thou hast always been, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God, as thou hast always done. You are under a special guidance; therefore, dutiful to yourself, obedient to God, beneficial to the people, take, as becomes you, the head, be the chief one; and you shall teach them ordinances and laws, and show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, assessors, elders, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. Make them subordinate judges to judge the people. And then in matters that need a great man to decide them, let them come before you; but in subordinate matters, where good sense and piety will form a proper judgment, then let them be taken by these assessors." These men, you observe, were not priests selected from the order of Aaron, but they were laymen selected from the crowd, not because they were rich or distinguished

in rank, but because they were able men, who feared God, loved truth, and hated covetousness.

Moses, instead of being self-willed, and thinking that he did not need advice, since he must know more than his old father-in-law could be expected to know from his circumstances, hearkened to the advice of his father-in-law, and did all that he said, and chose these people; and the consequence was, that there was peace, order, and prosperity in the camp, and a great mitigation of the toils and drudgery of Moses. It needs talent to take good advice as much as to give it. And Jethro his father-in-law went away happy to find that he had a son who was accessible to good advice, and Moses bade him farewell, thankful to God that he had a father-in-law able to give him such sensible counsel.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE LAW EXPRESSED NOT CREATED ON SINAI. ST. PAUL'S
COMMENTARY. DESCRIPTIONS OF SINAI.

THE scene represented in the chapter I have read, so full of solemn and awful grandeur, was designed to impress upon the whole people of Israel, and through them upon us, the holiness, majesty, and greatness of that law which was not made, but expressed and worded by God, upon Mount Sinai. It is altogether an error to suppose that the Law is to be dated from Mount Sinai. This Law of the ten commandments, which was delivered from the Mount, ever was, now is, and ever will be; and all that was done upon Mount Sinai was, to give expression to everlasting truth, to make audible God's innermost mind, and to show by distinct and unequivocal expressions what man's duty was, and what the extent of God's requirement is, and to enable the creature at the same time to feel that no man can climb to heaven by that Mount; that the gap between a fallen creature and the exaction of a holy God is so great, that, in the language of the Apostle, "by deeds of law no flesh can be justified." You will find this contrast very beautifully brought out by the Apostle in a passage perfectly parallel, and while

it is parallel, the most illustrative comment on it, in the 12th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, at the 18th verse, where he contrasts what the Jews were with what Christians are—the slavery, the fear, the terror of the ancient economy with the freedom, privileges, and blessings of the new. “For ye”—that is, ye Christians—“are not come unto the mount that might be touched”—that is, to a material mount—ye are come unto one that is higher and spiritual, and seen by faith; “and that burned with fire,” the indication of terror and judgment; “nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken unto them any more; for they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that Moses”—the meek Moses, the temporary and typical mediator between God and them—“said, I exceedingly fear and quake.” That was the state of the ancient economy; that is, people about Mount Sinai shrouded in darkness, lighted at intervals only by a lurid flame, the air ever ringing with the sound of a trumpet, and the reverberations of thunder—all the grandeur and magnificence of heaven without its mercy and love, resting, like a black cloud charged with judgments, over the head of a people whose consciences within condemned them, as well as the scenes without, and who felt they never could obey so perfect, holy, and pure a law. But what is our privilege? The whole scene is changed; the curtain is lifted; we have

passed by Christ, the mediator, the living way, into a very different state of things. We have left the region of storm and thunder, and the sound of a trumpet, for the region of peace, of love, of fatherly and cordial welcome; for, says the Apostle, "Ye Christians are come unto Mount Sion," whose head is bathed in the sunshine of heaven, "and unto the city of the living God;" not the desert hill without an inhabitant, but unto a city that hath foundations, the city of the living God: as if he wished the Gentile, as well as the Jew, to learn a lesson; for every ancient city was called after one of the gods—Athens was the city of Minerva, and Rome was the city of Mars, but these were dead gods and idols; but "ye are come unto the city of the living God"—who ever liveth—"the heavenly Jerusalem." Recollect the meaning of the word "Jerusalem;" it is *Yerusalem*, the Vision of Peace. Ye are come, not unto the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, but unto that bright and beautiful vision of celestial peace, prepared and purchased through the blood of the everlasting covenant. God makes Mount Sion and Mount Sinai, not comparison at all, but absolute contrast. And ye are come also to "to an innumerable company of angels," not to worship them, but to have them to serve you; for angels are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation. And ye are come to "the general assembly," or "the catholic company," as it might be rendered, "and church of the first-born"—not the sect at Rome, nor the sect at Geneva, nor the sect at Canterbury, but the whole assembly of all true Christians of every name scattered throughout the whole world, whose robes have been washed

in atoning blood, and whose hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit, and who are more anxious to belong to the Saviour than to any section in particular of the Church. And again, ye are come to "God the Judge of all,"—but, blessed be the thought, while he is our Judge, also our Father,—“and to the spirits of just men made perfect.” We come to them now by faith. Where is the whole Church of Christ? Some are in heaven; some are on earth; but the company in heaven and on earth constitute one ransomed, redeemed, and glorious Church; and I have not the least doubt that those who are separated from us are much nearer to us than our own immediate relatives and friends who are in the next parish, or town, or across the Channel, or on the Continent of Europe. True, we do not see them. True, we are not to pray to them. True, they cannot, probably, serve us; but in Scripture it seems almost stated that the saints in glory, like a cloud of witnesses, are spectators of our conflicts upon earth, and are watching with an interest that no language of ours can embody, the results of a struggle on which is contingent everlasting joy and felicity in heaven. And we are come, as if to crown all, to “Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.” And if we be surrounded, let me add, by such a cloud of witnesses, let me remind you of that beautiful thought of the Apostle, “Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,” what are we to do? Worship them? No. Pray to them? No; but “let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking,”—not to the

witnesses, but, as it is in the Greek,—“looking from them unto Jesus”—the Mediator of the new covenant—“and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” Such, then, is the New Testament comment on the impressive and solemn chapter I have read—a chapter that constitutes the preface to the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai as recorded in the chapter that follows.

Then God tells the people that the object of all his dispensations was that they might obey his law, and enjoy the happiness that grows upon true holiness; and that if they would obey His voice, then they should be a peculiar treasure. That which a man values most he regards as his peculiar treasure. “Ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests,” or, as it is called in the Book of Revelation, “kings and priests;” or, as Peter calls it, “a royal priesthood.” That is now fulfilled. All Christians are priests. A minister of the Gospel is not a priest in any sense in which the humblest layman in the congregation is not. There are instituted officially in the New Testament economy bishops, or pastors, or evangelists, or presbyters, or teachers, or whatever other epithet you choose from Scripture to apply to them; but there is no such officer in the Christian economy as a sacrificing priest. The reason is, that when the ancient economy passed away, Christ the everlasting high priest, shadowed forth by the priests of Levi, came, and he has now, as it is called in the Epistle to the Hebrews, ἀπαράββατον ἱερατεῖμα, “an intransferable priesthood,” Hebrews vii. 24—a priesthood that does not pass from him to any one whatever. All Christians are priests, and yet they are not all evan-

gelists, pastors, or ministers. But, you say, we must, then, have something to offer. Certainly—"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service," Romans xii. 1. "To do good and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased," Hebrews xiii. 16. You offer spiritual sacrifices on Christ, the altar that sanctifies the gift, acceptable to God for his sake.

Next, he tells Moses that the people should not touch the mount, but that at certain periods, when the trumpet should sound, long there should be some communion with Moses and Aaron for the enlightenment and instruction of the people. It seems that the expression used in the 21st verse, "The Lord said unto Moses," should be, "The Lord had said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish. And let the priests also, which come near to the Lord, sanctify themselves," alluding to what He had said, and not specifying something then for the first time.

There has been a great deal of dispute about the situation of Mount Sinai, and whether it can be identified at the present day. Bush in his "Notes" gives the following remarks:—"The breadth of the peninsula of Sinai is intersected by a chain of mountains called 'El Tili,' which run from east to west, and cut off a triangular portion of the peninsula on the south, in the very centre of which occurs the elevated group of mountains where the Sinai of the Bible is to be sought. This mountainous region, with its various

valleys and ravines of different dimensions, may be described as being comprehended within a diameter of about forty miles. Its general aspect is singularly wild and dreary, being composed almost entirely of naked rocks and craggy precipices, interspersed with narrow sandy defiles, which from being seldom refreshed with rain are almost entirely destitute of vegetation. Fountains and springs of water are found only in the upper regions of the group, on which account they are the place of refuge of all the Bedouins, when the low country is parched up. From all accounts it is difficult to imagine a scene more desolate and terrific than that which constitutes this range." A recent traveller (Sir F. Henniker) describes it "as a sea of desolation. It would seem," says he, "as if Arabia Petræa had once been an ocean of lava, and while its waves were running mountains high, it was commanded suddenly suddenly to stand still! Nothing is to be seen but large peaks and crags of naked granite, composing, as far as the eye can reach, a wilderness of shaggy rocks and valleys bare of verdure." Mr. Stephens, an American traveller, in his 'Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petræa, and the Holy Land,' thus graphically describes his approach to the region in question:—"Our road now lay between wild and rugged mountains, and the valley itself was stony, broken, and gullied by the washing of the winter torrents; and a few straggling thorn-bushes were all that grew in that region of desolation. I had remarked for some time, and every moment impressed it more and more forcibly upon my mind, that every thing around me seemed old and in decay: the

valley was barren and devastated by torrents; the rocks were rent; the mountains cracked, broken and crumbling into thousands of pieces; and we encamped at night between rocks which seem to have been torn asunder by some violent convulsion, where the stones had washed down into the valley, and the drifted sand almost choked the passage. At every step the scene became more solemn and impressive. The mountains became more and more striking, venerable, and interesting. Not a shrub or blade of grass grew on their naked sides, deformed with gaps and fissures; and they looked as if by a slight jar or shake they would crumble into millions of pieces. It is impossible to describe correctly the singularly interesting appearance of these mountains. Age, hoary and venerable, is the predominant character. They looked as if their great Creator had made them higher than they are, and their summit, worn and weakened by the action of the elements for thousands of years, had cracked and fallen. The last was by far the most interesting day of my journey to Mount Sinai. We were moving along *a broad valley*, bounded by ranges of lofty and crumbling mountains, forming an immense rocky rampart on each side of us. The whole day we were moving between parallel ranges of mountains, receding in some places, and then again contracting, and about mid-day entered a narrow and rugged defile, bounded on each side with precipitous granite rocks more than a thousand feet high. We entered at the very bottom of this defile, moving for a time along the dry bed of a torrent now obstructed with sand and stones, the rocks on every side shivered and torn, and the whole

scene wild to sublimity. Our camels stumbled among the rocky fragments to such a degree that we dismounted, and passed through the wild defile on foot. At the other end we came suddenly upon *a plain table of ground*, and before us towered in awful grandeur, so huge and dark that it seemed close to us, and barring all further progress, the end of my pilgrimage—the holy mountain of Sinai. Among all the stupendous works of nature, not a place can be selected more fitted for the exhibition of Almighty power. I have stood upon the summit of the giant Etna, and looked over the clouds floating beneath it; upon the bold scenery of Sicily, and the distant mountains of Calabria; upon the top of Vesuvius, and looked down upon the waves of lava, and the ruined and half-recovered cities at its foot; *but they are nothing compared with the terrific solitudes and bleak majesty of Sinai*. An observing traveller has well called it a perfect sea of desolation. Not a tree, or shrub, or blade of grass is to be seen upon the bare and rugged sides of innumerable mountains, heaving their naked summits to the skies; while the crumbling masses of granite all around, and the distant view of the Syrian desert, with its boundless waste of sands, form the wildest and most dreary, the most terrific and desolate picture that imagination can conceive." Carne, an English traveller, speaking of this district says, "From the summit of Sinai you see only innumerable ranges of rocky mountains. One generally places, in imagination, around Sinai extensive plains or sandy deserts, where the camp of the hosts was placed; where the families of Israel stood at the doors of their tents, and the line was drawn

round the mountain, which no one might break through, on pain of death. But it is not thus. Save the valley by which we approached Sinai, *about half a mile wide and a few miles in length, and a small plain we afterwards passed through, with a rocky hill in the middle*, there appear to be few open places round the mount. We did not, however, examine it on all sides. On putting the question to the superior of the convent, where he imagined the Israelites stood: 'Everywhere,' he replied, 'waving his hands about,—in the ravines, the valleys, as well as the plains.' The region of Djebel Katerin and Mousa seems to be the scene of the great event in question. The following extract from Professor Robinson's account of his visit to the spot in 1838, will go to lessen, very considerably, the objection founded upon the limited space for encampment. 'We approached the central granite mountains of Sinai, not by the more usual and easy route of Wady Shekh, which winds around and enters from the east; but following a succession of Wadys, we crossed Wady Shekh, and entered the higher granite formation by a shorter route, directly from the N.N.W., through a steep, rocky, and difficult pass, between rugged and blackened cliffs 800 to 1000 feet high. Approaching in this direction, we were surprised and delighted to find ourselves, after two hours, crossing the whole length of a fine plain; from the southern end of which that part of Sinai, *now called Horeb*, rises perpendicularly, in dark and frowning majesty. This plain is over two miles in length, and nearly two-thirds of a mile broad, sprinkled with tufts of herbs and shrubs, like the Wadys of the desert. It

is wholly enclosed by dark granite mountains,—stern, naked, splintered peaks and ridges, from 1000 to 1500 feet high. On the east of Horeb a deep and very narrow valley runs in like a cleft, as if in continuation of the S.E. corner of the plain. In this stands the convent, at the distance of a mile from the plain; and the deep verdure of its fruit trees and cypresses is seen as soon as the traveller approaches—an oasis of beauty amid scenes of the sternest desolation. On the west of Horeb there runs up a similar valley, parallel to the former. It is called El-Leja, and in it stands the deserted convent El-Erbayin, with a garden of olive and other fruit trees, not visible from the plain. The name *Sinai* is at present applied generally to the lofty ridge running from N.N.W. to S.S.E. between the two narrow valleys just described. The northern part or lower summit is the present Horeb, overlooking the plain. About two and a half or three miles south of this the ridge rises and ends in a higher point: this is the present *summit of Sinai*, the *Jebel Mûsa* of the Arabs; which, however, is not visible from any part of the plain. West or rather W.S.W. of the valley El-Leja, is the still higher ridge and summit of Mount St. Catharine. The plain above mentioned is, in all probability, the spot where the congregation of Israel were assembled to receive the law; and the mountain impending over it, the present Horeb, was the scene of the awful phenomena in which the law was given. As to the present summit of Sinai, there is little reason to suppose that it had any connection with the giving of the law; and still less the higher

peaks of St. Catharine, I know not when I have felt a thrill of stronger emotion, than when in first crossing the plain, the dark precipices of Horeb rising in solemn grandeur before us, I became aware of the entire adaptedness of the scene to the purposes for which it was chosen by the great Hebrew legislator." (*Bib. Repos. for April*, 1839.) Such are various descriptions of the mountain from which the Law was given, as recorded in the next chapter. Let us praise God that we are not come to Mount Sinai, with its savage bleakness, but to Mount Sion; that we are translated from darkness to light, and from seeking to be justified by a Law that we cannot obey to receiving complete justification through a Saviour who had obeyed the Law perfectly for us.

CHAPTER XX.

THE LAW OF GOD.

THE last chapter that we read last Sunday morning contained the sublime and majestic preface to the giving of the Law, when the people came, in the language of an Apostle, to the mount that might be touched, to blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which word they that heard it entreated that they should not hear it any more, and if so much, says the Apostle, as a beast or a living creature were to touch the mount, it was to be destroyed. We have now the proclamation of God's holy law from the mountain-top amidst the thunder, and the lightnings, and all the other awful accompaniments of that sublime and memorable transaction.

Recollect that this Law is quite distinct from what is called the ceremonial law. The Jews had three sorts of law. They had the moral law, the ceremonial law, and the political or civil law. The civil law existed for a time; its principles, as far as they are moral, relate to all time. The ceremonial law lasted till Christ, its end and its object, came. But the moral law, like the God that announced it, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

You will notice, also, that this Law was not invented on Mount Sinai, but only enunciated there. It was ever true; it is now true; and it ever will be true. God's enunciation of it on Mount Sinai was an act of mercy in letting his creatures know what was the precise exaction of his will, and what would be the highest conformity to that will, if the commands in stone could be transferred to the heart, and be made actual and real in the life and the experience of mankind.

This Law has been called in popular phrase "the Decalogue." It is called in Deuteronomy the Ten Commandments; and hence the word *Δεκαλογοι*, "ten words," "ten laws," or "ten commandments." I cannot enter on the laws themselves, for that would be incompatible with a short expository reading; but I may state that there has been a dispute from the days of Augustine as to the right division of the commandments. I think that no dispute can be sustained fairly as to distributing these precepts according to what seems their natural, just, and reasonable order; but by Augustine, who lived in the fourth century, and who was the most evangelical and best of the ancient writers of the Nicene Church, the second commandment, as we call it, was attached to the first; and then the last commandment was divided into two; and the ninth commandment, according to that arrangement, was, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife;" and the tenth was the remainder of the Decalogue. The Roman Catholic Church has taken the division of Augustine; and if it had stopped there, we should not have complained, because, however you divide the commandments, if

you give the whole, it is equally and substantially the same ; but unfortunately, by attaching our second commandment to their first commandment, they have gradually, year after year, lessened the second commandment, till in countless catechisms, many of which I have in my possession, the second commandment, as we call it, is omitted altogether. For instance, in an Italian catechism which I have, drawn up by Bellarmine, and sanctioned by two pontiffs in succession, the second commandment is totally omitted, and the fourth commandment is perverted, being thus written, *Recordati de santificare le feste*. "Recollect to sanctify or keep holy the festivals," the word "Sabbath" being wholly expunged. In the Irish catechisms the second commandment is left out, and also in a French catechism I purchased on the Continent last year. It seems as if some master mind among Romanists graduated the supply of the Decalogue according to the moral latitude of the place ; because in countries where the darkness is most dense, the fourth commandment is altered, and the second is omitted ; in places again where there is a little more light, as in Connaught, Leinster, or Munster, the fourth commandment is given, but the second is omitted ; in England the second is given to a very great extent, but not the whole of it ; but in Scotland, where the Roman Catholic authorities seem to think the light is the greatest, the second commandment is given fully appended to the first. So that it seems as if they had adapted the commandments to the amount of light that was in any particular country. I hope it is not uncharitable to think so ; for really the fact is so

striking, that one can scarcely explain it in any other way. As to the division of the last commandment, it would seem to be unreasonable, upon this simple ground. It happens that in the parallel passage in Deuteronomy, where the tenth commandment is given, it is written first "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife;" but in this passage it is first, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house." If the commandments had been intended to be divided according to the plan of Augustine, it would have been the same in both—thy neighbour's wife first, and thy neighbour's house second; but the fact that in the one version "house" is first, and in the other "wife" is first, is proof that this last commandment, according to our order, was meant to be a complete commandment, and never was designed to be divided into two distinct commandments.

Our Blessed Lord divides the whole Decalogue into two great Commandments, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Obedience to this Decalogue is based, not simply upon God's claims as a Legislator, which are most just, but also upon God's goodness as a Benefactor; for the preface to the Commandments is, "I am the Lord thy God—a covenant God—and I have done this good for you, I have brought you out of the land of Egypt; and therefore, because I am not only your Legislator, but your Benefactor, I ask you to regard obedience to the exactions of this Law as the highest happiness, as well as the supremest

obligation ; and I wish you to obey it, not because it is just, but because gratitude should prompt you to do so."

Then He says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Now mark the force of this. It is not, "Thou shalt not substitute any other gods for me," but, "Thou shalt not have any other gods in company with me." The Cæsars would have allowed to the image of our Blessed Lord a niche in the Pantheon, if the Apostles would have consented to the proposal ; but the answer of the Apostles was, "No ; our God cannot be in company with other gods. He must fill the whole Pantheon with his glory, or he will not enter it at all." It is so with the human heart. My dear friends, there ought to be in that human heart but one Supreme Governor, Lord, Master, and King. He will not share the human heart with others ; he must have the whole, or he will have none. And the great struggle that goes on in the case of thousands is not a struggle about superseding God by other gods, or dislodging the true God to let in an idol ; but it is a struggle whether our adhesion to the Christian religion be compatible with our adhesion to something else that is incompatible with it—whether God and other gods can live together in the same place. It cannot be. It is written, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

And not only so, but you shall not make any image for worship. This second commandment has been construed according to two extremes. The very severe and strict Jews construed it rigidly, and prohibited painting and statuary, and all the other parts of those beautiful and interesting arts. They said it was

absolutely prohibitory of making an image of anything in heaven*and earth at all. Others, again, have construed it so laxly, that they have made all sorts of images of everything in heaven and out of heaven, till at last human genius has been exhausted in representing things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, for the ornament of the Christian temple. Now it seems to me that the second commandment applies especially to churches. I would make churches as chaste and comfortable, even beautiful, as possible ; for I should not like to dwell in a cieled house while God's house is laid desolate ; but I do think that pictures of the Trinity in church windows are perfect abominations. In the first place, a picture of God the Father is most offensive ; and in the second place, even the master-pieces of Vandyke and Rubens, and others, who have painted our Blessed Lord, come so far short of the magnificent conception that lies in the holy place of every Christian heart, that we would rather not see such paintings at all ; and in the third place, the paintings that we do see in churches in this country are so shocking, that one does not envy the taste of those churchwardens who accept them. One can scarcely conceive that the piety is very enlightened that admits them there. And again, paintings of the Holy Spirit are very doubtful. It is thought by some that the Spirit did assume the form of a dove ; if he did so, it was incidental ; he was not incarnate in that form. The only defensive reasons are to be urged in favour of pictures of our Blessed Lord ; for it seems absurd to speak of likenesses of the other Persons in the Blessed Trinity. And if the pictures of our Blessed

Lord were portraits, one might consent to tolerate them; but they are no more portraits of Jesus than they are of the thieves that were crucified on his right hand or on his left; they are merely fanciful conceptions of an able painter's mind or genius, and even as such they are most exceptional. Let there be no pictures of the Deity, therefore, in our churches. And it is remarkable that in the early church this was so much felt, that when a great divine saw upon a curtain a picture of our Lord, he rent it in pieces. And we know that by the second Council of Nice in the seventh century, such pictures were barely tolerated, and were introduced amidst a great deal of objection.

Let me notice very briefly the fourth commandment. There has been a great deal of dispute about that. Some have said that it is not obligatory upon us. If so, why is it not in the civil and ceremonial law, instead of being given amidst the moral law? I admit that our Sabbath is not the Jewish one. I think the way in which the Jewish Sabbath was observed was cumbered with difficulties, that made it a burden. Works of charity and necessity, of which every Christian's conscience is the best judge, are permissible on our Sabbath. Some Christians, I think, have gone to very extravagant lengths upon the subject of the Sabbath, and have held ideas upon it, not as if it were the Lord's-day, but as if it were the Jewish day. But the moral Sabbath remains until now, although the Jewish observances are to be detached from it as altogether distinct.

You say, then, why observe it on the first day of the week? My answer is, that this fourth com-

mandment is not the consecration of the seventh day ; but it is the consecration of the Sabbath. It is not "Remember the seventh day to keep it holy ;" but, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." But you say, was it not observed by the Jews on the seventh day ? Certainly ; but the law is, that one day in seven shall be the Sabbath ; it does not lay down the order that it shall be the seventh day in numerical succession, but that it shall be one day out of the seven, on which the Sabbath shall be observed. Amongst the Jews, it was the seventh day in order ; amongst Christians, it is the first. The Jewish candlestick was the seventh day, ours is the first ; but the light is still on the latter, as it was on the former, the Sabbath-day : so that the institution of the Sabbath is quite distinct from the day on which it is to be observed.

You will always find that the Sabbath is the index of national religion, morality, and virtue. Where the Sabbath has ceased to be a holy day, and has become a worldly holiday, you may contrast the state of such nations with our own country, where, in comparison, it is so well observed. I remember, in 1851, what an impression was made upon continental nations, when they came to the Crystal Palace, and saw that that beautiful and useful creation of human genius was open six days in the week ; but that, even amidst the works of art and the productions of nature, nations from afar could read, in the light of England's sunshine, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy."

CHAPTER XXI.

SLAVES AND MASTERS. REASON OF TOLERATION OF SLAVERY. LEX TALIONIS.

PERHAPS the best distinction between the Law, as recorded in the previous chapter, commonly called the Decalogue, or the Law of the Ten Commandments, and the peculiar laws that I have now read, is this, that the former are moral, binding in all ages, in all countries, and under all circumstances; and that the latter are national and judicial, and specially applicable in their details, at least to the Jews in their nomad state, in the desert, previous to their entering into Canaan, but at the same time, like all specific prescriptions in the Bible, containing great and general truths, instructive and binding everywhere and at all times.

Now this is the first chapter, and one of the chiefest, that treats of a subject that has made a great deal of noise in the present day, namely, the subject of slavery. It is very plain that there were two classes of slaves among the Hebrews, using the word "slave" in its strict and ancient sense. There was a Hebrew slave, or a slave from among the Hebrews; and there was a slave from other countries, a stranger, a heathen, and a Gentile. There

were distinct codes of laws for each class of slaves ; but the laws laid down for the regulation of slavery, as it existed amongst the Hebrews, were public laws settled by judicial opinions, were known to the slave and to his master, and were inspired with a mercy and a controlling beneficence, that makes ancient slavery, so called, almost as different as light is from darkness, from the slavery that we once had in the West Indies, and that the Southern States of America at this day unhappily are stained by.

In reference to the Hebrew slave there is one point that is very striking, and that is, that whatever was the obligation under which a slave came amongst the Jews, never was his person regarded as chattels, as goods, as property. His services were bought for life, or till the years of jubilee ; but his person never was regarded as property to be sold in the market, and never, in any sense, was man then degraded and debased as he has been by slavery in modern times. This is a point worthy of notice. In the second verse it is said, "If thou buy an Hebrew servant." You will say, does not that mean property acquired by purchase ? But it is remarkable that the word here translated "buy" is fully as frequently translated "acquire" or "procure," either by inheritance, by donation, or by free-will offering, and not in the sense of giving an equivalent in money for what you possess. For instance, the same Hebrew word is used by Eve, when she says, at Cain's birth, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." That does not mean that Eve purchased Cain, but that she obtained Cain from the Lord. The very same word is used in Proverbs, where it is

translated, "He that heareth reproof *getteth* understanding." Again, we have it in Psalm lxxviii. 54, "He brought them to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased," that is, acquired or procured. We might therefore most justly translate this second verse, "If thou procure, acquire, or obtain, in any way, an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve." And you will notice that when money was given, as it was in some instances, it was fixed by the servant that his master was to give him so much for his services, for seven, fourteen, or twenty years, or for life. He sold his services for a period, just as a servant does now. But giving money to the slave for his services is very different from giving the money to his former master, and letting the slave derive none of the benefit of his work.

Again, in those times, a Hebrew in extreme poverty might sell himself; under similar circumstances, a father might sell his child; an insolvent debtor might be sold to pay his debts; a thief who could not make restitution might be sold as a slave; and a captive taken in war was frequently treated in like manner.

Now, it is needless to deny that slavery did exist under the express toleration of God; but it was so mitigated and intermingled with alleviating elements, that the slavery of the ancient Hebrews differed most widely from the slavery which exists in modern times in some of those nations under whose constitution it is still retained. But while slavery was tolerated it was not approved of God. In the same manner polygamy existed amongst the patriarchs, but it was not a Divine institution. Our Saviour

refers back to the original law, when he says, "They twain shall be one flesh"—one man and one woman. Polygamy existed amongst the Hebrews, and was practised by the patriarchs, and our Lord explains why: it was connived at, or suffered, for the hardness of their hearts. So, slavery existed in a mitigated form amongst the ancient Hebrews. God did not abolish it by a sweeping law, but introduced those enlightening, sanctifying, and elevating principles, that soon sapped the existence of polygamy and slavery, and every other evil practice that existed in the Hebrew nations. In those countries where slavery is now, it seems as if it would be a revolution to tear it up by the roots; but still, there ought to be a very speedy and decided attempt to mitigate, and eventually utterly to remove it. The atrocities that exist in modern times—selling a husband to one, his wife to another, and the children to a third—were never dreamt of amongst the Hebrews, and have been tolerated in modern nations, I think iniquitously before God and unprofitably to themselves.

We have an express enactment in the sixteenth verse against what is unhappily done in modern times. "He that stealeth a man"—it matters not whether he be an Asiatic, an African, or a European—"and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death." Now, if man was regarded as property then, I ask, why was it that if a man stole an ox, he had only to return an ox as an equivalent? or if he stole corn, he had only to repay it in so much corn as an equivalent? but that if he stole a man, he came under a new law altogether; he was not called upon to make an equivalent, but

the crime was regarded as so atrocious, that he who was guilty of it was to be put to death? We have this very law repeated in Deuteronomy, xxiv. 7. "If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him, then that thief shall die, and thou shalt put evil from among you." That is a very strict prohibition, and seems to be as obligatory at the present moment as in ancient times. I may mention, also, that in 1 Timothy i. 9, where we have a list of the most extreme offenders, there is one class specified in our translation as "menstealers." The word so rendered is *ανδραποδισταις*, which means literally, "men who make a trade in men;" and the best translation of that Greek word is "slave-traders," which expresses exactly the meaning of the original; and the text distinctly shows that slave-trading, or dealing in human beings as goods and property, is an offence and crime in the sight of God to be classified with the worst.

Thus we have seen that slavery no doubt existed amongst the Hebrews, or was tolerated by God; but secondly, that mitigating elements were introduced into it, which made it entirely differ from modern slavery; thirdly, the law of master and slave was a matter for the cognizance of the public judicial tribunals of the country, and not a matter of private judgment at all; and fourthly, if a master in anger struck his slave, and that slave lost a tooth, that slave became free. Now what a mitigating element was that! I do not know the laws of the Southern States of America, but I should fancy that if a slave were struck by his master, he would not become free; and

that if he were to quote this chapter, he would be told that he had no business with the Bible, since he was a beast of burden and not fit for instruction. But here was a most mitigating element. And again, slavery as it existed then, I have said, was tolerated by God, not approved, just as polygamy was ; but Christian truths and Christian principles are calculated to put an end to it ; and they have already, as far as this great country is concerned, put an end to all practice or sanction of man-selling, and slave-holding. It is surely a beautiful trait in our native land, that the slave from the Southern States of America, or from Spanish Cuba, or any other country where slavery is tolerated, is a free man the instant his foot touches our shores. He may be poor, or ragged, or sick, but free he is ; and no power in the wide world can bind in chains that visitor, that refugee, whom our noble constitution pronounces to be a free man. In verse 7 we see that a female taken as a slave was viewed as likely to become the wife of her master—and if he should not marry her, his son might, or if neither did, she was to go out free, and with property besides.

We read next in this chapter of what is called the *lex talionis*, or the law of punishing an offence by inflicting the very same injury upon him who had done it. But this has very often been misconstrued. “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,” is the expression of the law ; but it did not mean that literally and without alternative. This might be done, or an equivalent or satisfaction might be accepted for the injury. In the case of murder it is said that no satisfaction should be taken, implying that in other

cases it might be. Besides, this was not a private retaliation. The offender was to be brought before the public tribunals of the country. But our Blessed Lord, in that magnificent discourse pronounced on the Mount, has said that that is not to be the rigid law. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil." You are under another dispensation; you have a brighter light, higher privileges, richer knowledge; and therefore, you must act in the spirit of the Gospel, and not in the spirit of the *lex talionis*, or the law of retaliation.

The last thing I notice here is the punishment of murder. It is here repeated that a murderer shall be put to death. And this is so often implied throughout the Word of God, that I think there can be no possibility of escaping the conclusion that this is a Divine and a permanent law. We have it before the institution of the Levitical economy, where God says to Noah, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed;" and you have the law repeated here; and you have the prohibition in the Commandments, "Thou shalt do no murder;" and you have the penalty of death here attached to it. It seems to be that crime which is ever to be so punished, and the only crime, as far as the Word of God is a guide, that ought to be so punished.

CHAPTER XXII.

JUDICIAL LAWS. ANCIENT MONEY. BURGLARY. TRESPASSERS.
LAW-SUITS. STRANGERS. MONEY-LENDING. OFFENCES
AGAINST MAGISTRATES.

I THINK I noticed in the course of my remarks on the previous chapters, that a great part of these laws was topical ; that is, peculiar to the place and age in which they were made ; and that they were also judicial—that is, not so much for the regulation of personal conduct and personal feeling between individuals privately, as for the guidance of the judges who sat upon the bench, and pronounced decisions according to the merit of the causes that came before them. These laws were special. You recollect that the Hebrews came out of Egypt a race of craven, degraded, miserable slaves ; they were not ripe for perfect laws. We can see, therefore, that much of the law that is here laid down is adapted to society in its infant state, or when very feebly and imperfectly developed ; and only as they grew in light, in power, in knowledge, and in understanding, the laws would rise, become purer, and indicate altogether a higher tone for the guidance of the people. But suppose, now, that you knew nothing of the inspiration of these laws, would you not be very much startled to hear this, that an individual called Moses marched a

number of miserable slaves out of Egypt, led them through the Desert; and without any inspiration, but by the might of his own genius, struck out laws so just, so seasonable, so fair, reaching almost every point where society may be at fault, and providing for every contingency with a precision, equity, and good sense, that must strike every one who reads them. Is it possible to suppose that a man who was forty years in the Desert, and forty years a subordinate in Pharaoh's court, should have been able, from his own genius, to invent laws, in comparison of which those of Solon are extremely imperfect and poor? Is it possible to account for all this in any other way, than that God inspired Moses so to teach?

The reason why so much is said about oxen and sheep was simply this, that what we call money was not then in existence; an ox was given for an ox, or a sheep for a sheep; or, if a man wished to buy a robe or a wardrobe, he gave so many sheep or oxen for it. And this usage of cattle as money is the origin, as I have noticed before, of our word "pecuniary." The Latin word *pecunia*, "money," is derived from the Latin word *pecus*, "cattle." The first coins had struck upon them oxen or sheep, indicating that cattle was the substantial property; and that gold, silver, or copper coins were but the conventional representations of that property. Thus, then, "if a man shall steal an ox," which was property, "or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it," then, as the punishment of what he has done, by the decision of the judge, "he shall restore five oxen," the only property that could be given in compensation,

"for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep." It seems strange that five oxen should be restored for stealing an ox, and only four sheep for stealing a sheep; but the fact is, that the ox was to the Israelites and the Easterns generally everything. Not only was his skin used for leather, and his flesh for food; but he was the animal that drew their carts, dragged their ploughs, and did all the drudgery of their fields. An ox was more capable of labour than a sheep; and, therefore, there was a greater crime in stealing an ox than a sheep, on these grounds, and these grounds alone.

It is said, that if a thief be found breaking into a house, and if the landlord or proprietor in self-defence smite him, so that he die, this is not murder, nor even homicide. The case shall be examined into; but no one who has thus killed a burglar shall be put to death as a murderer. We may here notice how all this implies, what underlies it all, that murder was to be punished with death. The very proviso, that there was to be no punishment of death in this case implies the previous sanction of the death penalty, where deliberate and preconcerted murder had been committed. But, "if the sun be risen upon the thief"—that is, if the proprietor of the house kill him deliberately—then "there shall be blood shed for him;" that is, it is murder, it is not justifiable homicide, in any shape or sense: "for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft." You can see that this clause is wrongly translated. How could he be sold, if previously killed? It ought to be translated, and the original Hebrew necessitates

what I now state as the true translation, "Blood shall be shed for him; for, if he had been spared, the law requires that he should have made full restitution; and that, if he had nothing, he should be sold for his theft." Then, "if the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep, he shall restore double"—that is, if he be caught.

"If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution;" that is the punishment for trespass.

Then, "If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field be consumed therewith, he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution." It is found still in Eastern countries that the grass or vegetation becomes all withered and faded before the wet season comes, under the intense heat of the summer sun; and it is the practice still, I find by reference to persons who have turned their attention to this, and to competent testimony, to set fire to the dry stubble, because the carbon that is deposited from the consumption of the grass or vegetation fertilises the soil for the next crop. But if a person, in order to get his field well manured, shall be so careless, that he shall allow the flame to be blown by the wind into his neighbour's standing corn, he shall make restitution.

Then it is said, "All manner of trespass shall come before the judges,"—it shall not be adjusted privately, but publicly. There has been a great

misapprehension about lawsuits. The Apostle certainly prohibits going to law before the heathen ; but in the Old Testament you can see that the forms of public justice are recommended. The distinction in the Apostle's days was, not that it was sinful to go to law, but that it was most inexpedient to go to law before the heathen. I think it is quite right, where there are Christian judges, as in our own land, to go to law, if two parties cannot agree upon a matter. There may be great fault on the one side, and great sin on the other ; but if they cannot adjust their dispute, it is quite right to go before a court of justice, and get a decision there according to the merits of the case ; but where the matter can be settled by two or three witnesses or friends, then it is much better, and vastly cheaper, that this course should be taken ; but still, it is not sinful to adopt the other.

Again, we read, " If a man deliver unto his neighbour an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast to keep, and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it," then an oath shall be exacted from the person who had it that he has not used any unfair play with it.

Again, " If a man borrow ought of his neighbour, and it be hurt or die, the owner thereof being not with it," then he who took the sole charge of it shall be chargeable for it ; but " if the owner thereof be with it," then it is common sense that the owner alone shall be responsible for it.

It is added, " Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him : for " (how beautiful is the reason !)
" ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." Sympathy

must teach you how you ought to act. You know what a hard time you had of it in Egypt; and that fellow feeling must teach you to sympathise with the stranger, and not to afflict the widow and the fatherless.

It is said, "If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury;" that is to say, you shall not demand a per-centage larger than is legal and proper; for it was not, I think, the law in the Old Testament, that no interest should be received for money. If that be sinful, which is not asserted, then every one who has money in the funds is living in constant sin. But usury means receiving more interest than is just and equitable according to the laws of trade, and the conventional compact that, by law or usage, exists in any country.

Then it is written, "If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down." This seems to us almost a mystery; but if you will recollect what Eastern customs were then, and still are, you will see how natural it is. The raiment that he pledged was the outer robe that not only sheltered him from the weather by day, but was also the only blanket in which he wrapped himself at night; just as in the Highlands, where the plaid was not only the covering by day, but the blanket by night. So, if a man pledge that which is his only covering by night, when, without it, health would be endangered; then you are to restore it to him before night: for I will that, in doing justly, you shall not forget mercy; "for I am gracious," saith the Lord.

It is written in the 28th verse, "Thou shalt not revile the gods nor curse the ruler of thy people." The word "gods" is used here plainly in the sense of magistrates. You recollect that the Apostle Paul, when he spoke to the high-priest, said that he did not know that it was the high-priest; for "thou shalt not revile the ruler of thy people." It is in the original *Elohim*, and so judges were frequently called; and it means, "Thou shalt not revile the judges, nor curse the ruler of thy people." Whenever inferiors begin to calumniate or to ridicule those who are set in office in the land for the administration of justice, it weakens their influence upon the people; and does much harm without doing any good.

Then he refers to the offering of first-fruits, and concludes the whole chapter by saying, "Ye shall be holy men unto me."

These laws are most merciful and considerate; and indicate an inspiration that was more than human; and when you regard them not as the only existing laws, but as a national supplement to what was the moral law, which we read in the 20th chapter, you will see their wisdom and completeness. Outward ceremonial purity was constantly employed as a type of inward purity. These laws implied a world gone wrong, and seem to have been indications of its restoration. They were parts, and some of them the merest pegs, of a gigantic scaffolding. Every day brings us nearer to that blessed era, when the headstone shall be laid on the completed edifice, amid shouts, "Grace, grace unto it."

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CHAPTER XXIII.

LAWS AGAINST CALUMNY. EXCESSIVE DEFERENCE TO AUTHORITY.
JUDICIAL RULES. FESTIVALS. THE ANGEL JEHOVAH.

I HAVE already observed, after reading the twentieth chapter of the Book of Exodus, that it contained a universal or moral law, obligatory upon all the nations of the earth, in all ages and at all times ; but I took occasion to state, that immediately after the moral law, Moses received from God certain judicial laws, which were to be observed by the judges and public officers of the nation, the benefit and blessing of which, as just and equitable in themselves, that favoured people were thenceforth privileged to receive. Each of the laws that we have read this morning, is full of equity, tenderness, and love, all breathing mercy, and indicating, unquestionably, that they were the inspiration and creation of the wisdom of God.

In order to see the divine origin of these laws, just consider what these people were. They had come out from Egypt, depressed, ignorant, illiterate. How could the Jewish nation, as I have already said—debased, degraded, broken-spirited (Moses the only exception)—have conceived laws so full of justice, of equity, of mercy, of considerateness as these ? The

very truths that are here revealed are evidences that Moses wrote, not under the prescriptions of human genius, but according to the inspiration of God himself. No laws of Solon, or of any other ancient legislator, are for a moment to be compared with these. There is no basis of comparison—there is contrast, instead of comparison. Yet these are the laws of a then barbarous people, just emancipated from the thralldom of Egypt.

Now, the first of these, as indeed all, are for the guidance of judges, and of all who have judicial functions to fulfil—"Thou shalt not raise a false report"—that is, you shall have no malignant feeling towards your neighbour, and you shall not indulge that malignant feeling, if it do exist, by trying to take away his good name. People do not always estimate this offence as they should; but it really is one of the worst depredations. "He that steals my purse, steals trash; 'tis his, 'tis mine, 'tis everybody's; but he that takes away my good name, takes that which not enricheth him, and makes me poor indeed."

Where did the great poet learn this true and beautiful thought? Either from the inspiration of human genius, which sometimes approaches near to divine grace, or he borrowed it—as is most likely—from the word of God.

Then he says, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." The word *multitude* is the translation of the Hebrew word *Rabbim*; and this word is the origin of the Hebrew term Rabbi, as applied to the chief teachers or instructors of the Jews; and some of the best translators hold, that we ought not to render it, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do

evil," but that we ought to translate it, "Thou shalt not follow the Rabbis, thou shalt not follow the greatest or chiefest teachers to do that which is evil." In other words, "If we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel, let him be anathema;" or, translated into modern language, if all the priests, and prelates, and popes of Christendom together, constituting the true or pretended teachers of the earth, were to tell you to shut your Bible, or to worship images of gold, and silver, and wood, and stone, or to command you to do anything that this book declares to be evil, in such a case this is the law that must regulate your conduct, "Thou shalt not follow all the teachers of England, of Scotland, or of Rome, to do that which is evil;" in other words, you must take your directions from God's mouth, not from the Pope, or the most honourable or the greatest of men that give prescriptions of an opposite nature.

He adds, "Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause." Now this seems, at first sight, very difficult to understand. One would think that we ought to countenance a poor man in his cause; but the meaning of it is this: If a poor man is accused of a crime, and brought before a judicial tribunal, then, just as you should not do anything that is partial, because a great man has committed a crime, and is tried for it, so you are not, out of mere pity, to let a criminal escape, because he is a poor man. In other words, you are just to act upon the principle which prevails in our native land. If a man is brought before the tribunals of our own country, it is the glory of our land—and a great glory it is—that the poor man and the rich man will both have a fair

trial, and no favour. The poor man's poverty is not to make you so pitiful that you shall try to make him appear innocent, when you gather from evidence that he is guilty; and a man's riches are not so to dazzle you, that you shall endeavour to shield his crime, because he is a great, and, as reputed, an honourable man.

This seems also, in some degree, to refer to barristers and pleaders. Many persons have had doubts upon a subject connected with this profession; but it seems to me that there ought to be none. The law of our country requires that the greatest criminal shall have a fair trial. Suspicion shall not condemn him, and your own feelings shall not prejudge him; and, therefore, if a barrister is called upon to defend a great criminal, it is right that he should state what room for doubt exists—that he should state every point that is favourable, if it be fact, to the establishment of the innocence of his client. However guilty a man may be, he should have a fair and impartial trial. Let clear law and conclusive proofs decide, and nothing less. We are not to let a man escape punishment because he is great, nor are we to try to let a man escape because he is poor. Neither our suspicions, nor his circumstances, should decide. We are to deal impartial justice to all, saying all that can be truly said for the worst, and nothing untrue for the best.

Now, these laws were not merely for a certain age: they are the laws that ought to regulate judicial proceedings at all times and in all countries.

How very beautiful is this regulation, "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again." You are

not to say, No, I am glad that such an one, who has injured me, has met with misfortune; but you are, if a Christian, not only to pray for your enemies, but to help them, if you can.

Again, in the sixth verse, he says, "Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause"—that is, you shall not try to pervert it, because he is poor.

And again: "Thou shalt take no gift; for the gift blindeth the wise." That does not mean that a private person may not; but, referring to judges upon the bench, the law says, that they (the judges) shall not take a gift.

I dare say many of you may have heard of the celebrated Sir Matthew Hale, that he was in the habit of receiving a present from a person annually; and it happened once, that about the usual time when this friend made him the present, that he was accused of some offence, and was to appear as an accused person before Sir Matthew Hale. On this occasion Sir Matthew Hale returned him the present, lest it should afford even the shadow of a suspicion that the purity of judicial impartiality should be disturbed, or seem to be disturbed, by a gift from one who was to appear before the court accused of an offence, and demanding a fair trial. And I believe still it would be thought the most scandalous outrage upon our constitution, and every judge would repudiate it with scorn and disdain, were any one, expecting to have his cause tried by that judge, to attempt to propitiate his favour by gifts. Now, this beautiful rule—so just, so reasonable, so proper—was anticipated and was known, you observe, three thousand years ago, and

was first revealed by Him who is the Fountain of all wisdom and of all justice.

We have, in the tenth and eleventh verses, a very important law—of course inapplicable to us—viz., for six years they were to cultivate their land, and the seventh year they were to allow it to lie fallow—partly for the sake of the land, and partly for the sake of the poor: and God made the harvests abundant in the sixth year, in order to compensate for the deficiency, or rather, utter cessation, of the seventh year, that followed.

This law was national, peculiar, and is not obligatory upon us, though merciful to them, and adapted to the circumstances in which they were placed.

But lest they should suppose that this seventh year Sabbath was to do away with the regular Sabbath, it is added, "Six days thou shalt do thy work; and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed."

Now, this seventh year was for the universal physical rest and enjoyment of the people; and the Sabbath, or seventh day, was especially meant for the religious instruction and spiritual rest of the people. In addition to the Sabbath, therefore, you observe, there was a year during which the people were to have rest; and I think that, in our land, it would tend to the sacredness of the Christian Sabbath, as it would also tend to the substantial good of the people, if there were to be throughout the year, days, or even part of days, in which the mill should stand

still, the hum of business should be hushed, and the hard-working man should be permitted to rest physically for a little. And it is this, I have often said,—what I am perfectly sure is right—that is the cause of the present demand for the desecration of the Sabbath—for such I must call it; a demand that is the reaction of the grinding exaction of the masters, who work their servants beyond what is due, and necessitate rest for the body on the Sabbath, when there ought to be religious instruction and improvement also. And while on this subject, I may mention, that on the continent of Europe, and in those countries now under the dominion of the Romish system, there is one fact that we must acknowledge to be worthy of imitation—they have many holidays; too many in Spain, and in some other parts, but still in so far desirable; and thus we may get from ancient days some customs conducive to the health of the people, meet for modern imitation. This is, so far, an institution that we may wish for, while we reject the superstition in which it may chance to be embosomed.

We read, in the next place, of the three great festivals which they were to observe, and at which all the people were to meet together; the three great festivals which characterized the Jewish economy, and which were to be observed all the days of its existence.

God says, “Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way.” That this was not a created angel, appears to me plain, from the frequent allusions to his character in other portions of the Bible. “The angel of the Lord,” it is in our translation; every Hebrew scholar knows that that is the

translation of *Melek Yehovah*, which means, "Angel Lord;" *of* is not in the original, it is literally, "Angel Jehovah." And the word here which has been rendered "Angel," might, with as great propriety, have been rendered, "Messenger," or "one sent." "Behold, I send an Angel before thee,"—a Messenger before thee,—“to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions.” Now, that this is not a created angel, is obvious from that phrase; and never, at any age of the church that has ever given a sort of subordinate religious service to angels, did it ever attribute to an angel the prerogative of pardoning sin. And the very fact, therefore, that this Messenger is gifted to such an extent, implies that he was not a created angel, but that he was the Angel of His presence, of whom Hosea says, "The Angel of the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, is his name." I have no doubt, therefore, that this was our blessed Redeemer, in one of those forms of humanity which he took, and in which he appeared before his Incarnation, eighteen hundred years ago. And this Angel, or Messenger, appeared in the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, by which the people were guided in their way.

We thus see, then, how merciful, how just, how wise these laws are; we see that civilized nations have not yet got beyond them, and that some of our highest judicial arrangements are but copies or plagiarisms from what Infidelity would call the obsolete and antiquated notions of Moses and of the Jews. It has been discovered that all our improvements

have not yet reached further than Leviticus, and perhaps they never will.

Whilst there is much that was local, national, and peculiar, there is in all this much that is moral and universal; as advantageous to man, as it is honourable and glorious to God.

The nineteenth century is not yet in advance of the Christianity of the New Testament. It is, in many respects, behind the morality of the Old.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MOSES GOES UP TO GOD. VALUE OF A WRITTEN WORD. RESPONSIBILITY. THE SIGHT OF GOD. OUR PRIVILEGED PLACE.

IN the first verse we find a summons addressed to Moses, who was figuratively the type of the only Mediator, Jesus Christ, to come up into the immediate presence of Jehovah; an access so near and intimate as had never been vouchsafed to any creature before, and this special communion was given to him rather from his official relationship than from his personal character. He said that Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel, were to worship afar off—evidently upon the mountain side, about its middle, and not near its top, or the intenser apocalypse of Deity—Moses alone was to go up to its loftiest crag, as invited, and there hold communion and fellowship with the Great “I Am.”

Forthwith Moses told the people the solemn message he had received from God, and all the judgments which he read to the people, and submitted to their minds for their preference and acceptance; and all the people pledged themselves to their observance by a solemn and unanimous proclamation—“All the words which the Lord hath said will we do.” They

were sincere, but too self-sufficient—they did not expect that so soon these solemn vows, uttered with such emphasis, would be forgotten and violated. Some vowed in their own strength, some vowed rashly, and some without thought. Others, however, strong in that strength which is made perfect in weakness, pledged themselves to an observance that was as much their privilege and duty, as it was glorious and honourable to God.

We read that “Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar.” How important is it now to us that what God revealed should be written. The great experiment was tried from the Creation to the Deluge, whether traditional transmission of God’s truth would prove adequate; and the result of that traditional transmission in the lapse of two thousand years, was that all flesh had corrupted its way, and that, with the exception of eight persons, a universal apostasy had spread over all the earth, and infected all families. Now, therefore, God commanded his Word not to be entrusted to failing memories, and to frail hearts, for its transmission, but to be written, made a stereotype, a fixture, upon living stone, that the people might, in all generations, have access to God’s own Word, written in God’s own way, and free to them, and to all their children, without money and without price, for ever.

Moses builded twelve pillars and an altar—twelve pillars to represent the twelve tribes, and the altar as a place of sacrifice, indicating that by sacrifice alone, in that dispensation, there was access to God.

We are told, that “he sent young men of the

children of Israel, which offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord." The order of the Levitical priesthood was not yet instituted, and hence the first-born of each family, being regarded as the most excellent in that family, was selected to be the officiating priest, and to offer sacrifices to God; and, therefore, he sent young men—the first-born—of the children of Israel, to offer up these burnt-offerings.

The sacrifice was slain, and the blood was shed, in order to enable the people, in a yet more solemn manner, to ratify by sacrifice the promise they had given, in so many words. And when they had thus ratified the pledge by sacrifice, they substantially said, "As the blood of this lamb is shed and poured out on the altar, so may we suffer death, with all its consequences, if we do not cleave to these solemn obligations that we have undertaken, from the mouth of Moses, the servant of God, this day." It was, therefore, a very solemn pledge of adhesion to the commandments which God had promulgated, and a unanimous declaration that they were not ashamed to own themselves the Lord's.

"Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel"—Moses the nearest to the top—and the others to remain at the middle of the mountain.

And what an instance have we, in Nadab and Abihu, of great privilege to-day being followed by great sin and heavy judgment to-morrow. Only a short time afterwards, Nadab and Abihu both incurred the penalty of death for offering strange fire; as if to teach us that people may enjoy the utmost

privilege, may be raised to heaven by their privileges, and may yet sink to the depths of ruin by their sins. Justly does our Lord say, that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for such—and that if Tyre and Sidon had known those things that Chorazin and Bethsaida knew, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

We have here also a sublime and impressive portrait of the glory of God. It is plain they did not see a human shape when they saw the Deity; but the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night revealed to them the intensest splendour, and they themselves were brought nearer into contact and communion with it. We are told by an Apostle, "God, whom no man hath seen or can see." The human eye cannot see a spirit; spirit may see spirit, but flesh and blood cannot now see spiritual and eternal things. It is, therefore, undoubtedly true, that God no man "hath seen, or can see." What Moses therefore saw, was, no doubt, the awful splendour of the presence of God—the glory that burned between the cherubims, the bright splendour that shone in the majestic cloud that preceded them in their journey, showing them the dangers and difficulties by which they were surrounded, called elsewhere the Shechinah. They described the appearance by saying, "There was under his feet as it were the paved work of a sapphire stone"—that is, the colour of the firmament—"and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness."

And then, it seems always to have been the impression that to see God was to cease to live, and that

death was the necessary result of a near and intimate sight of Deity. And this accounts for the language, "And upon the nobles"—that is, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the seventy elders, the persons that were specially favoured—"God laid not his hand"—that is, he did not destroy them—"also they saw God, and did eat and drink"—these words implying that this bright vision did not overwhelm them, that it did not prevent them from engaging in the ordinary duties, employments, and enjoyments of life, and that they acted and felt as men in the presence of the Lord God of Hosts. True religion does not interrupt life's lowliest duties.

Moses then, at the command of God, went up closer and nearer to His presence, commanding the elders to tarry there until he should come again, and leaving Aaron and Hur, as his representatives among the people, in case of any dispute or quarrel breaking out amongst them, that thus there might be present persons competent to entertain and settle it.

We then read that "the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and the seventh day"—that is, on the Sabbath—"he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud." And Moses, we are told, was forty days and forty nights in the Mount.

How thankful should we be, that the God revealed in the Gospel is not the inapproachable glory, the consuming fire, but our Father. How thankful should we be that no individual upon earth—the loftiest prince or the highest priest—has any precedence in his approach to God: the humblest Christian has as free a right of access to God as the

greatest and most illustrious in the land. It is true of all, it is written for all, "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace; that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in the time of need." And let us praise God that we are not come to Mount Sinai, and to the blackness of darkness, and tempest, and the voice of words so terrible that Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake," and if a beast should touch the mountain, it was to be destroyed; but we are come to a brighter and happier dispensation—we are come to Mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, and unto Jesus, the Mediator of the new Covenant, whose blood speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE TABERNACLE. ITS USE AND DESIGN. ITS MINUTIÆ NOT MEANINGLESS. ANALOGIES. PLACES OF WORSHIP. ECCLESIASTICAL POLITICS. EXCLUSIVENESS.

THE following is an instructive account of the Tabernacle :

“As we enter in the present chapter upon the directions given to Moses for the erection and furnishing of the sacred structure called *the Tabernacle*, it will be proper to dwell a little in the outset upon the grand design of an edifice so remarkable in itself, and holding so prominent a place in the Mosaic economy. The Tabernacle was, in fact, the central object in the Jewish system of worship, and without a tolerably correct idea of its form, uses, and ends, our view of the genius and scope of the Hebrew ritual will be essentially defective. It may perhaps be admitted, that as some of these ends were of typical import, pointing forward to a period of the Christian dispensation which has not yet been fully developed, we may not be able to unfold, in all its fulness, in the present state of our knowledge, the entire reach of meaning which in the divine mind was couched under this significant structure, and its successor the Temple. Yet, with the lights reflected

upon it from the expositions of the New Testament and the predictions of the Old, we may doubtless attain to an interesting and edifying insight into its leading drift. We are persuaded that it is a study fraught with the most important practical results, and though generally considered, like the other symbolical portions of the Scriptures, as constituting a field of mere curious, fanciful, and speculative research, yet we cannot question that this opinion will be ere long entirely reversed by a deeper reverence for *every part* of revelation subordinating to itself the irrepressible spirit of inquiry which is pervading every department of knowledge, whether scientific or sacred, natural or supernatural. The book of revelation, like the book of nature, is designed to be of gradual development ; and we know not why it is not as reasonable to look for the opening of new mines of scriptural wealth as of new mineral treasures, that have been imbedded for ages in the bowels of the earth.—But to the point which we have more immediately in hand.

“ The opinion has been widely entertained, that in the early ages of the world, under the impression of the grand truth that ‘ God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth,’ —that this divine spirit filled all things, and *was* equally present in all parts of his creation—men *had* no *sacred places*, but worshipped God wherever and whenever their hearts were drawn forth towards him in veneration, gratitude, or love. To the soundness of this opinion thus broadly expressed, we are disposed to object, on the same grounds on which we object to the theory that makes the primitive state of

man a *savage* state. *It is not, we conceive, in accordance with the recorded facts of inspired history.* We cannot but conclude, from the tenor of the sacred narrative, that from the creation of Adam to the present time, God has dealt with man by way of *express revelation*. The infancy of the race was cradled in the midst of supernatural disclosures, and the light of the divine *manifestations* continued to shine with brighter or dimmer beams upon its advancing youth and manhood, up to the riper age which it has now attained. With the record of Genesis before us, we cannot question that Jehovah manifested himself between the cherubims at the east of the garden of Eden, and that this earliest exhibition of the Shechinah ~~was the appointed place of worship~~ for Adam and his family, ~~the~~ place to which Cain and Abel *brought* their oblations, and the place from which Cain, after the murder of his brother, retired in miserable exile, when he is said to have fled from the *presence* of the Lord. True it is, that the major part of the race lapsed, by a very early defection, into the grossest idolatry, and the *visible symbols* of the divine presence, if enjoyed at all, were confined to a select few; but we know not that we are warranted in the belief that the knowledge of the true God, or of the right mode of worshipping him, has *at any time* become entirely extinct on earth. As a matter, however, of historical fact, it is unquestionable that most of the early nations of the world, under the promptings of a religious principle, rendered their worship, such as it was, in a vague and informal manner, without temple or ritual, to the invisible Deity in whom they were taught to believe. It was not unnatural that in these

circumstances they should have selected the tops of mountains and the shades of groves as the seat of their worship, and there fixed their altars for sacrifice. But in process of time, as men sank deeper and deeper into idolatry, the practice of worshipping on high places and in groves became associated with so many vile abominations, that it was utterly forbidden to the Israelites, to whom God was pleased to prescribe a *localized* worship, first within the precincts of a Tabernacle, and afterwards of a Temple. The Tabernacle was little else than a portable temple ; as no other kind of structure would have suited the earlier circumstances of the chosen race. A nomade people would of course have a moveable temple ; and, among a tent-dwelling people, that temple would naturally be a tent or a portable fabric of wood. An immoveable temple could only be expected to be found among a settled race ; and when a moving people become settled, and exchange their tents for houses, in like manner their moveable tabernacles become fixed temples. ‘ See now,’ said David, ‘ I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth between curtains.’ He therefore proposed that the house of God should be no longer a tent, but a fabric of stone, in accordance with the altered circumstances of the people. But until the Israelites were settled in the land of promise, their sacred edifice, if they had one, must necessarily be such as they could easily take to pieces and transfer from place to place. The object of such a building was not, like that of our churches, as a place of shelter for the assembled worshippers, for the worshippers assembled not *in* the temples, but in the courts before or around them ;

nor yet as places for offering sacrifices, for the sacrifices were also offered in the courts. Its true design was as *a mansion of the Deity, a dwelling-place for the divine presence*. This was especially and pre-eminently the object of the Jewish Tabernacle. It was intended as a habitation of the visible symbol of Jehovah, or the Shechinah, as the God and King of the chosen people, who, as we have seen above, is emphatically designated 'the God of Israel.'

"In ordering the construction of such a building, we may admit that there was an accommodation to ideas then very universally prevalent, and which from their residence in Egypt had become familiar to the minds of the Israelites. The Egyptians and other heathen nations boasted of the presence of their gods among them in their temples and tabernacles; and as God had been pleased from the earliest periods to reveal himself to the patriarchs by visible manifestation, it was not unnatural that he should at length confer upon his people the permanent tokens of a peculiar local presence in some such striking and glorious symbol as that of the Shechinah. With this view he directed the Tabernacle to be erected as a suitable abode for his visible majesty. As such, it possessed the two-fold character of a *Sanctuary*, or *holy place, a place of worship*; and of a *Royal Palace*; where he would keep the state of a court, as supreme civil magistrate and king of Israel; from whence he would issue his laws and commandments as from an oracle, and where he was to receive the homage and tribute of his subjects. This idea of the Tabernacle, as in part that of *a palace for a king*, will seem perfectly clear to every one who carefully notes the terms

in which this building, and also the Temple, are spoken of and referred to throughout the Scriptures ; and we doubt not it is a view essential to the right understanding of these structures and the things which belonged to them. It is a view also which is held by the Jews themselves, who carry out the analogy, and regard the utensils of the Tabernacle as *palace furniture*, and the priests as its ministers of state and officers. Take, for instance, the following comment of Rab. Shem Tob on Maimonides, as cited by Outram on Sacrifices, Diss. I. § 3. ‘God, to whom be praise, commanded a house to be built for him resembling a royal palace. In a royal palace are to be found all the things that we have mentioned. There are some persons who guard the palace ; others who execute offices belonging to the royal dignity, who furnish the banquets, and do other necessary services for the monarch ; others who daily entertain him with music, both vocal and instrumental. In a royal palace there is a place appointed for the preparation of victuals, and another [nearer the Presence] where perfumes are burned. In the palace of a king there is also a table, and an apartment exclusively appropriated to himself, which no one ever enters, except him who is next in authority, or those whom he regards with the greatest affection. In like manner it was the will of God to have all these in his house, that he might not in anything give place to the kings of the earth. For he is a great king, not indeed in want of these things : but hence it is easy to see the reason of the daily provisions given to the priests and Levites, being what every monarch is accustomed to allow his servants.

And all these things were intended to instruct the people that the Lord of Hosts was present among us, 'For he is a great king, and to be feared by all the nations.' These analogies will be the more apparent when it is remembered, that the comparisons are to be referred to an Oriental rather than a European palace.'

"We do not, however, consider it sufficient to regard such a view of the Tabernacle as founded solely upon the usages of royalty as *then* existing. We are satisfied that its *typical* design is necessary to account for those features which it possessed in common with the palaces of kings. The Glory that dwelt both in the Tabernacle and the Temple was pre-intimative of the even yet future manifested glory of Christ, to which the 'earnest expectation of the creature' has been long looking forward, and of which the incipient dawnings begin now faintly to appear. The import of the ancient visible Shechinah and its material habitation has never yet been realized as it is destined to be in the latter day on earth; nor do we conceive it possible to gain a full and adequate idea of the *kingly* features of this typical establishment without looking forward to the time when the Saviour, combining sacerdotal sanctity with royal dignity, shall sit 'a priest upon his throne,' in the earthly Zion, in accordance with the entire drift of the Old Testament prophecies. This is the state to which the anticipations of all Christians are *really* directed—a state which is to be ultimately evolved out of the present by a stupendous order of changes, moral, political, and physical. The New Jerusalem of the Apocalypse is the grand object of the Christian's hope; and it is

in that glorious dispensation, the theatre of which is the earth that we now inhabit, that we are to look for the *substantial realities* so strikingly figured in the ritual apparatus of the old economy. It is the state constituted by the final development of the Kingdom of Heaven out of the regenerated and transferred dominions and dynasties of the earth, over which Jesus Christ is to reign in *visible majesty*, his redeemed people being made, in some way at present inscrutable to us, to share with him in the beatitudes and glories of his eternal kingship. It is in that dispensation, or perhaps we may say, in that stage of *this* dispensation, that the things mystically foreshown by the Tabernacle structure and the Tabernacle furniture will be made real. It will then appear how admirably adapted it was in its twofold character of Sanctuary and Palace to correspond with the twofold functions of Christ as Priest and King. But the farther unfolding of this view of the subject would carry us imperceptibly into the region of prophetic exposition, which our present plan does not embrace.

“The detailed and minute account which we propose to give of every part of the Tabernacle may be prefaced with the following general description, for the most part in the words of the Editor of the Pictorial Bible. First there was the area or court in which the Tabernacle stood. This was of an oblong figure of a hundred cubits (about 150 feet) long, by fifty cubits (about 75 feet) broad; and the height of the inclosing curtain was five cubits, or nearly three yards, being half the height of the Tabernacle. The inclosure was formed by a plain hanging of fine twined linen yarn, which seems to have been worked

in an open or net-work texture, so that the people without might freely see the interior. The door-curtain was however of a different texture from the general hanging, being a great curtain of 'fine twined linen,' embroidered with blue, purple, and scarlet. It is prescribed in precisely the same terms as the door-curtain of the Tabernacle itself, which was not, as commonly stated, of the same fabric with the inner covering of the Tabernacle, and the veil before the holy of holies; for in the description of the two door-curtains there is no mention of the figures of cherubim and the fancy work ('cunning work') which decorated the inner covering and vail. The door-curtain of the court was furnished with cords, by which it might be drawn up or aside when the priests had occasion to enter. The curtains of this inclosure were hung upon sixty pillars of brass, standing on bases of the same metal, but with capitals and fillets of silver. (Compare the description in this chapter with that in chapter xxxviii.) The hooks also, to which the curtains were attached, were of silver. The entrance of the court was at the east end, opposite that to the Tabernacle; and between them stood the altar of burnt-offering, but nearer to the door of the Tabernacle than to that of the court. It is uncertain whether the brazen laver was interposed between the altar and the door of the Tabernacle or not. Chapter xxx. 18, certainly conveys that impression; but the Rabbins, who appear to have felt that nothing could properly interpose between the altar and Tabernacle, say that the laver was indeed nearer to the Tabernacle than was the altar, but still that it did not stand in the same line with

the altar, but stood a little on one side to the south. As to the position of the Tabernacle in the court, nothing is said in the Scriptures on the subject, but it seems less probable that it stood in the centre than that it was placed towards the farther or western extremity, so as to allow greater space for the services which were to be performed exclusively in front of the Tabernacle.

“ The fabric properly called the Tabernacle having moveable walls of board, was of a more substantial character than a tent; but it is right to regard it as a tent, its general appearance and arrangement being the same, and its more substantial fabric being probably on account of the weight of its several envelopes, which required stronger supports than are usually necessary. It was of an oblong figure, fifty-five feet in length, by eighteen feet in breadth and height. Its length extended from east to west, the entrance being at the east end. The two sides and west end consisted of a framework of boards, of which there were twenty on each side and eight at the west end. The manner in which these boards were joined to each other, so as to form a wall which might be easily taken down and set up again, may be illustrated in some degree by a reference to the window-shutters of an extensive shop; but the boards of the Tabernacle did not slide in grooves, but each was furnished at the bottom with two tenons, which were received into sockets in the bases of solid silver; and to give the whole greater security, the boards were furnished each with five rings or staples of gold, by means of which they were successively run up to their proper places on horizontal poles or bars, which

served as the ribs of the fabric, binding its parts together. The boards as well as the bars were of shittim wood, overlaid with thin plates of gold. The east end, being the entrance, had no boards, but was furnished with five pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold, and each standing on a socket of brass. Four similar pillars within the Tabernacle, towards the west or further end, supported a rich hanging, which divided the interior into two apartments, of which the outer was called 'the holy place,' and the innermost and smallest was 'the most holy place,' or the 'Holy of Holies,' in which the presence of the Lord was more immediately manifested. The separating hanging was called by way of eminence, 'the vail;' and hence the expression 'within' or 'without the vail' is sometimes used to distinguish the most holy from the holy place. The people were never admitted into the interior of the Tabernacle. None but the priests might go even into the outer chamber or holy place, and into the inner chamber the high-priest alone was allowed to enter, and that only once in the year, on the great day of atonement. To this, however, there was a necessary exception when the Tabernacle was to be taken down or set up. The outer chamber was only entered in the morning to offer incense on the altar which stood there, and to extinguish the lamps, and again in the evening to light them. On the Sabbath also the old shew-bread was taken away and replaced with new. These were all the services for which the attendance of the priests was necessary within the Tabernacle, all the sacrifices being made in the open space in front of the Tabernacle, where stood the brazen altar for

burnt offerings. It will be useful to observe, that the most holy place contained only the ark with its contents; that the outer apartment contained the altar of incense, the table of shew-bread, and the great golden candlestick; while the open area in front of the Tabernacle contained the brazen laver for the ablutions of the priests, and the brazen altar for burnt offerings.

“ This description will give an idea of the general arrangement and substantial structure of the Tabernacle; and we may proceed to notice the various curtains which were thrown over and formed the outer coverings of the tent. The first or inner covering was of fine linen, splendidly embroidered with figures of cherubim and fancy work in scarlet, purple, and light blue. It is described in the same terms as the vail of the ‘ holy of holies,’ and was doubtless of the same texture and appearance with the vail, which, according to Josephus, was embroidered with all sorts of flowers, and interwoven with various ornamented figures, excepting the forms of animals. Over this inner covering was another, made of goats’ hair, which was spun by the women of the camp. Cloth, made of goats’ hair, forms the customary covering for the tents of the Bedouin Arabs to this day, and it still continues to be spun and woven at home by the women. Over this covering was another of rams’ skins dyed red, and over that the fourth and outermost covering of tahash skins. These curtains, after covering, or rather forming, the roof, hung down by the sides and west end of the Tabernacle, those that were outside being calculated to protect the more costly ones within, while the whole combined

to render the Tabernacle impervious to the rain, and safe from the injuries of the weather."

If one were to read this chapter after a perusal of the sublime and impressive descriptions of the worship of God in the New Testament, and were to suppose that it had no ultimate reference to anything beyond it, but that it was simply an architectural plan, laid down by God, and carried out by Moses, he might infer that the God so gloriously revealed in the New Testament cannot be the same God who descends to communicate such seemingly mere paltry details as these. But all the difficulty is at once removed, when we recollect that everything recorded here is to be explained, not in its own light, but in the light that is cast upon it from the dispensation that now is, and still more, as I shall show in the course of my sermon, from that bright and perfect dispensation that is yet to be. The truth is, that every jot and tittle of it foreshadows and typifies the grand and beautiful reality that comes nearer and nearer within the horizon every day, the first beams of which begin to glimmer already in the distance.

We therefore regard this as worthy of God, not in its absolute state, but simply because it is part and parcel of a great, a glorious, and future reality.

When you look at a complicated machine—as, for instance, at a railway locomotive engine,—there are parts of it that seem to be utterly worthless in themselves; the pin in the axle seems a very worthless thing, but if that pin were to drop out, the machinery would all go wrong, and human lives be sacrificed.

And so it is here; there are instructions about bowls, and branches, and almonds, and flowers, and knops, that seem very trifling, but when seen, as we shall yet see them, in connection with a bright and perfect glory that is to be, and as part and parcel of a grand scheme, a sublime plan, progressively developed, then the minutest detail will appear instinct with meaning, and the most insignificant instruction indicate by its reference, its beauty, and its place. And if there should be some among these elaborate arrangements that we cannot now see the meaning of, and if there be some instructions that we cannot perceive to have a special, definite, and direct application, yet it is no reason for saying that they are puerile, much less for calling them useless. Are there ~~not~~ many things in creation that we cannot understand the why and the wherefore of? Are there not many things that are to us inexplicable in the habits of the minutest insect, in the existence and organization of the birds of the air, the fishes of the deep, and the cattle on a thousand hills? There are facts and phenomena that the naturalist has not yet comprehended, that man has not been able to explain the ultimate object and the ultimate bearing of. The geologist, who goes down into the earth to study its pages, finds things that he cannot explain, but he does not say, "These things are worthless, because I cannot explain them;" he lays them aside in his cabinet, as beyond his present limited experience, perfectly satisfied that everything that is has its meaning, and that God never made the least creature or the greatest without some ultimate design of beneficence. Accept the whole of the Bible

as God's book, and then you easily accept everything in it as God's inspiration. And it seems to me that the humble way, and the Christian way, is to say, This part I do see the meaning of, and this part I do not at present understand; but I am quite satisfied that what I do not understand now I shall understand hereafter. We are living in a dark and hazy twilight. The fact is, we are much less creatures than we think ourselves: there is far more reason for humility than there is for pride or presumption, and it is the far more reverent and becoming way to study all that God has revealed, and search out all its meaning and its mystery, by the guidance of the Spirit, as far as we are able; and when we meet with things that defy inspection—either too minute for us to inspect, or too magnificent for us to comprehend—let us not say, “These are useless and unworthy;” but let us be sure and let us feel that they have a meaning, though we cannot now understand it. It is not that they are dark, but that we are ignorant.

In the erection of this Tabernacle God seems almost, for the first time, to localize a place for his own peculiar and spiritual worship on the earth. We do not read, before this, of temples and sanctuaries built by the express arrangement of God for his own worship. The only intimation, if such it be, is the place of the cherubim at the gates of Paradise; it is supposed that those flaming cherubim at the gates of Paradise, that fenced off every application to enter, till the great atonement was made, and the true Paradise was opened, were associated with those described in this chapter; and that when Abel went to present his sacrifice to the Lord, he went into the

symbolic presence of the Lord—that is, into the glory that shone between these cherubim, and at that spot, and in that light, he offered up a sacrifice, which was acceptable unto God ; and as if to explain the justice of this supposition, it says, “ Cain went forth from the presence of the Lord ”—as if God was visibly present, by the token of the Divine majesty, in the splendour of which the ancient sacrifices were offered up to God. After that, we find that Abraham’s tent was his temple, his sanctuary, and his church ; wherever he pitched his tent, we are told, there he erected his altar. I say that the worship of God was acceptable, in the patriarchal dispensation, everywhere—it was the worship that consecrated the place, not the place that could make the worship acceptable to God.

But, on this occasion, we find God selecting as it were a portion of the earth, and, if I may use the expression, specially consecrating it for worship, and as a place where he would reign as a king, speak as a prophet, receive sacrifices, and give directions for the management of that theocracy which commenced in the desert, and ended when the glory departed from Israel. And this so far warrants us in that great inference, that there should be places set apart for the public worship of God everywhere ; we find that we are so much the creatures of time, of circumstance, of place, that without some spot on which to assemble together to worship, worship would cease to be practised altogether. And as a matter of common experience, it has been proved that, while it is possible, on the one side, to hold that worship in a sanctuary or a cathedral alone is acceptable wor-

ship, it is just as possible to trample it in pieces, and tread it under foot, and to think that there is no use for it at all. It is quite true that there is nothing in a place that a presbyter can appoint, or that a bishop can consecrate, or that priests can bless; that will make a bad man's prayers, presented from a bad heart, acceptable to God; and there is nothing in the bleakest desert of Africa, nothing on the bosom of the deep, nothing in the midst of conflict, to prevent a good man's prayers, presented in the name of Jesus for mercy and forgiveness, finding acceptance before the Hearer of prayer. It is now strikingly true, "Neither on this mount nor on that shall ye worship; but God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth, for such he seeketh to worship him."

And therefore it does appear to me, that the custom that prevails on the continent of Europe, of keeping the church doors—meaning by the church, the sacred edifices—open all the day, that people may go in there and worship, is calculated to do more mischief than good. It is inculcating the notion, that prayer can only be accepted near the altar, or on the tessellated pavement, or the consecrated floor; and it also tends to do away with that far more beautiful, far more precious thing, family worship, morning and evening, in your own drawing-room, or hall, or dining-room, or wherever you may have it; it tends to lead you to think that the house in which you live is a profane place, and so fit for profane acts only, and that the consecrated space within four walls is the only holy place; whereas, when Jesus allied to himself the dust of the world, he consecrated it all for his temple; and in his

own beautiful words, "Wheresoever two or three are met in my name,"—*wheresoever*, it must be somewhere, but it may be upon the hill-side, it may be in the streets, it may be in the upper room—"wheresoever two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"—there is a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Great Sanctuary, the only consecrated place; in him we are to pray, and prayer in him is always acceptable to God. Why was prayer and sacrifice specially acceptable in tabernacles and in temples of old? Because they were types and shadows of Christ, the true Temple. Hence Jesus said, "Destroy this temple," or tabernacle, "and in three days I will raise it again. This spake he of his body." As the ancient Jew, in the days of Daniel, opened his window, and looked towards Jerusalem when he prayed; so the modern Jew, or the true Christian—for circumcision is not that of the flesh but of the spirit—is now, when he prays, not to open his window, and look towards Rome, or Constantinople, or Jerusalem; nor is he to look for a consecrated place, or a holy place to kneel in, or a holy altar to bow before; but he is to turn his heart towards Christ, who is the Great Chancel of the universe, and to feel perfectly assured that prayer, in that name, with a heart looking to Him, rises in acceptance before the Lord God of Hosts.

You will notice in this chapter, that the people were to be asked to give what would build the temple. We have here an instance of what our dissenting brethren would call the Voluntary system; but we must, however, recollect not to shut our eyes to an instance that Churchmen would also quote in favour

of the Establishment principle. The fact is, you will find both in the Bible ; and it is in the combination of both that the greatest good can be done. The fact that there may exist the one—or a provision for religion by the State—is no reason why we should be slack, on the other hand, in contributing to what is right, and beneficent, and wise. Here, then, however, God orders the children of Israel to bring an offering, “ of every man that giveth it *willingly* with his heart.” Such contribution is not to be put on by the Church-rulers, as a tax that you are to be compelled to pay ; it is not to be an inspection of your rent-roll, or an examination of your income, and afterwards assigning you to give so much towards helping the Church, or to maintain the Church, or for any other religious purpose—that is neither the Voluntary system nor the Establishment system ; but such a combination of the worthlessness that may adhere to the one, and of all the wickedness that may grow up in the other, that it ought to be repudiated by everybody. Whatever you give for the cause of Christ, you are to do it under a sense of responsibility to God only ; and you are to give whatever you give willingly with your heart—not by constraint, not by compulsion from Pope, Prelate, or Presbyter.

We have here also a list of the ornaments to be used in the sacred fabric. It would take a long time to explain the blue, and the purple, and the scarlet, and the onyx stone, and the rings, and the knops, and the branches—what they were and whence they came. There were reasons for them.

You will notice, however, that everything that was done was to be done minutely, after a pattern that

was shown to Moses—it was to be done minutely—there was a heavenly pattern. Now people say that there is a certain proof of which is the right church. One says, that the only true church is an Episcopal Church ; and some of our fathers in Scotland went quite as far in their day as Tractarians in ours—they went as far as any Pope ever did. Some of them said that there was one church only, and that it was the Presbyterian Church. And it is a very interesting fact, and one which Tractarians would do well to consider, that in the days of Hooker—the enlightened, the intellectual, and the able advocate of Episcopacy, it was Travers the Presbyter who said that there was no church except it was governed by the Presbytery. Hooker held and proved that episcopacy was lawful. He admitted the validity of presbytery. But he alleged episcopacy was not wrong. But now the tables are turned, and some of the descendants of Hooker assert that episcopacy alone is right, and the descendants of Travers now have no sympathy with him.

But in the New Testament we have no description of the church as graphic, as minute, as express, as this in Exodus. It is worth while to notice the contrast. The ancient temple had every pin, every stick, stave, candlestick, knop, flower, snuffers, all minutely specified and described ; but when we come to the New Testament, we find the essentials most definite, most exclusive, most unmistakeable, but the mere form, or the system, or the *régime* of the church, left almost unnoticed and untouched. I defy any one to say that Episcopacy, or Congregationalism, or Presbyterianism, is the exclusive form of church polity laid down in the New Testament. If the word “ bishop ”

occurs, which it does, it is the same as presbyter. For instance: Paul, writing to Timothy, says, "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A *presbyter* must be blameless." And when the Apostle Paul went to Ephesus, which was only a small town, not the size probably of Bath, he found no bishops in this town, in the modern sense, but he called together *τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους*, the *presbyters*. And he said to the presbyters, "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *ἐπισκοπούς*, *bishops*; it is in our translation *overseers*; and I think it is a pity it is so. It is said that James VI. had a dislike, on this side of the Tweed, to the religion that he held on the other side of the Tweed, and decided in England that bishop and presbyter were not the same. In the last quoted text the word was rendered, it is said at his request, "overseer." Those expressions used in the New Testament, such as presbyter and deacon, then meant, I believe, very little more than ministers, having congregational duties, and who were to be teachers of the truth, and examples of godly living.

But in the worship of God there must be some arrangement and some order; but the monstrous notion of an exclusive ecclesiastical polity, as held by some in the present day, has no foundation whatever in the Bible; and therefore, with great propriety, they go to certain fathers and writers of the Nicene school, where they find what they cannot discover in the New Testament Scriptures.

CHAPTER XXVI.

REASONS FOR MINUTE MECHANICAL SPECIFICATIONS—ANALOGIES
BETWEEN GOD'S WORK AND WORD—EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS
—THE VEIL—THE HOLY OF HOLIES.

You will remember, that, in the course of a few remarks upon the previous chapter—explained at greater length in the discourse I preached subsequent to it—I showed you that all this was constructed after a pattern shown to Moses on the Mount; and that we had there the symbol and indication of the relative spiritual bearing and importance of this institution; that there can be no hesitation in concluding that it was pre-figurative of a yet more glorious tabernacle to be pitched—a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It is in allusion to this that John, in the Apocalypse, records, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men.” Here, in the desert, it was the tabernacle of man, wrought after the pattern shown by God; but in that glorious world that is to be, the original itself is revealed, the copy is for ever superseded, because unnecessary; and there shall be no need of the light of the sun and of the moon; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the light thereof.

I showed you what was the meaning and import of

the various arrangements of the Tabernacle, by referring to that beautiful explanation of them—the Epistle to the Hebrews. If you were to look at these minute details of minute mechanical and architectural arrangements, and to see nothing beyond, it would seem that this chapter contains prescriptions utterly unworthy of God, and altogether derogatory to what we should suppose worthy of the glory of the Great King, that he should lay down rules for “taches,” and for “couplings,” and for “corners,” and for “rings,” and all those minute and little details that seem to us in themselves so contemptible—I say, seem to us contemptible, for they really are not so. There is as much architectural skill displayed in the creation of a beetle or a bee, as there is in the arrangement of one of the fixed stars; and there is as much of God’s omnipresence, omniscience, and beneficence revealed in minute things that the microscope shows us, as there is displayed in the majestic and magnificent things that come within the sweep and range of the telescope; so that many have often doubted—as, indeed, they may—whether the unseen world beneath us that art enables us to detect, or the great and countless orbs that are above us, tell most forcibly the greatness and the goodness of Him that made them. And just as in the material world there are great things and small things, all mingled together, yet each having its place, so it is here, where we see great things spoken of—as in the twentieth chapter of this book, where the Law was revealed, and here, where these minute and mechanical details are arranged; proving the connexion between God’s made book,—the earth and universe,—

and God's written or revealed book,—the Bible. And, as I believe I noticed last Sunday, it does not follow that because we cannot see the use of every arrangement here, we are therefore to conclude that it is useless. We cannot dig twenty feet into the earth, we cannot look very far into the sky, without finding ten thousand things that we cannot tell the end, the object, and the reason of. The fact is, we think ourselves much greater than we really are; and it is a lesson that we need to learn, to lean upon an Omnipotence that we cannot comprehend, and to be thankful for an Omnipresent watchfulness which we can neither trace nor detect, and that we do not deserve. Let us believe that whatever God has made in the outer world has its meaning, its end, and its object, though we cannot see it; and that in the inner world—the Bible—every thing—the taches, rings, curtains, coverings—all have their meaning, their end, and use, though we do not now understand it. Man thinking, man saying that things are not right, because he cannot comprehend them, is like a man denying the extent and magnificence of the firmament, because he cannot mete it by a foot-rule in his hand; and because he cannot comprehend a thing, he thinks that it has no meaning, no end, and no object, and therefore that it is worthless. Let us remember that, in all that God has made, there are many things that we can easily comprehend, and for which we will bless and praise him; there are many things to test and try our humility, and to make us feel that what we know not now, we can only hope that we shall know hereafter.

But you will notice that all this is alluded to by

the Apostle as having special meaning, when he said, "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shew-bread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second vail, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing; which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption

for us." There is the beautiful and expressive commentary.

But, you say, Why should God give the minute regulations here? I answer, first of all, that, in the erection of a building now, before you can get men, who are merely mechanical in their office, to execute your orders thoroughly, you must lay down very minute laws. And here was a semi-savage, semi-barbarous, murmuring, ungrateful race, in the midst of a desert, come out from the slavery of Egypt. God left nothing to their own invention, but laid down minutely and exactly—line upon line, and precept upon precept—certain regulations and laws, so that the very worst builder of Israel might not err therein.

The close of the chapter refers to the distinction which existed of the holy place, which the apostle alludes to in Hebrews ix., namely, the veil that hung between the holy place and the most holy. There was the outer court for the laity; there was the holy place for the priests; and there was the most holy place, or the holy of holies, into which the high priest went, not without blood, once a year.

Now, before the holy of holies there hung a very magnificent curtain or veil; and you will recollect that when Jesus died upon the cross, and said, "It is finished!" this veil, which was in the tabernacle, and also in the temple, was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, signifying that from that time all Levitical sacredness was gone; that all distinction between the outer and the inner court, the chancel and the nave, the holy of holies and the holy place—all was gone; the sacredness now is made by the work in

which we are engaged. "Wherever two or three are met in my name," says the Saviour, "there am I in the midst of them"—that is, there is a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But while the ancient economy existed, this distinction was kept up, and ever taught and impressed a great and precious truth—that Christ must come, and die, and enter into the true holy place, before there could be access from grace to glory, and from the outer to the inner court.

CHAPTER XXVII.

REASONS OF SO MINUTE REGULATIONS. SEPARATION OF ISRAELITES.

THERE is scarcely a remark applicable to the previous chapter that is not also applicable to this. I explained, in the course of my observations on the previous chapter, that if you were to judge of this merely as an elaborate arrangement, without ultimate reference to something that was to come, or as disconnected with some great moral and spiritual arrangement, we should conclude that the God who wrote and inspired that magnificent record—the Ten Commandments—never could have condescended to give such minute regulations as are contained in this chapter, of pins, and sockets, and net-work, and fine twined linen, and purple, and all the measures, the length and breadth thereof. The two seem incompatible. In the twentieth chapter of Exodus, all is majesty, magnificence, and moral grandeur—the circumstantial lost in the spiritual, the transient in the eternal; but here everything seems paltry, minute; for which one cannot see, in judging of it by itself, the necessity for special inspiration to point out, or for special inspiration to record.

But when we open the Epistle to the Hebrews, and read it as the commentary upon Exodus and Leviticus, we see that there was a meaning in all

the institutions of Levi, of the most precious, and, for the time and in the circumstances of the people, of the most instructive character. There may be subordinate reasons to this. They were a barbarous people, just come forth from the slavery and bondage of Egypt, without knowledge of science, architecture, or mechanics, or any sort of knowledge that could qualify them for suitably constructing an edifice in which was to be conducted the worship of God.

There may be another reason. It was meet that God should regulate the minutest points in the tabernacle—which ultimately developed itself into the temple of Solomon—because the tendency of the Israelites—as a people insulated from the rest of the world, and set apart for the maintenance of the true worship of God, and the maintenance of God's inspired truth—their tendency was to borrow something from the Egyptians, or the Canaanites, or other heathen nations round them; at first an innocent introduction of a beautiful rite, but afterwards the erection in its niche of an idol for them to worship. We can see, from the whole history of this people, that if God had left in the architectural specifications the least point to be filled up by them, they would have built, in that opening, a niche for an idol, or for the introduction of a practice that might ultimately counteract the great object for which these institutions were established.

We can see, therefore, first, in their ignorance, as exiles and refugees from Egypt, a reason for special and minute instruction; and secondly, in their tendency—developed in their whole history, to introduce extraneous rites and idolatrous customs from other

nations—reason for leaving not a niche, or a crevice, or a nook, or a cranny, for anything that God had not already specified and minutely described.

And lastly, we can see a grand design in it all, from certain things that are here mentioned. The tabernacle, as I showed you in the course of my sermon on a previous Sunday, constantly alluded to a greater that will appear; till at last the song of saints in heaven and saints on earth proclaim the blessed truth. “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men; and I will dwell with them; and they shall be to me a people, and I will be their God.”

We have, then, secondly, the holy of holies, into which the high priest went but once a year, not without blood, and made intercession for the people; and I showed you how constantly that is alluded to in the Epistle to the Hebrews as the great type or foreshadow of the entrance of the Great High Priest, not into the holy of holies that was made with hands, but into the true holy place, there to appear in the presence of God for us.

We have also, in this chapter, a description of the brazen altar, on which the sacrifices were burnt: made of wood, but lined with brass, and, according to Josephus, having stones and earth between the brass and the wood, in order to prevent the heat of the fire consuming the wood.

We have next all the apparatus requisite for the due, and proper, and becoming service of the sanctuary, when sacrifices were offered. We have the whole measure of the tabernacle itself—its breadth and its length; the whole length of the court from the north side being an hundred cubits. It was a large

enclosure, about a hundred and sixty feet in length, and with so many feet corresponding in breadth.

There was, then, the holy of holies inside of it, at the farther end, into which the high priest alone entered; all of which, says Paul, are the figures of the truth, waiting till Christ, the true High Priest, should come, and the veil that separates earth from heaven should be rent, and there should be access for all the people of God to the immediate presence of Jesus Christ.

We next read of the lamp that was to burn in the holy of holies. I stated last Sunday, that the holy of holies was dark; there was no window for the ingress of light: but this lamp, with its seven branches, was kept constantly burning. Perhaps the dimness of that place was intended to denote the dimness of that dispensation; and all the mystery that was about it was designed to stimulate the minds of the Israelites to wait, and long, and pray for that time when they should no longer see through a glass darkly, but face to face.

Then the oil that was to be used was very choice. It was not the oil crushed by rollers out of the olives; but it was oil that dropped itself, without pressure, and was, therefore, pure, and better than the oil which was ordinarily used.

And all these arrangements stood as long as this economy lasted, the type to continue till the anti-type should come. That antitype is now come, and therefore the figures have evaporated; and now that the realities have taken their place, it would be apostasy from the truth to re-introduce what has as divinely vanished away as it was divinely introduced.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

INSULATION OF THE JEWS. EVERY PART OF TABERNACLE ITS USE. CHRIST THE END OF ALL. ROMISH ECCLESIASTICAL DRESSES. SIMPLICITY. MEANING OF "HOLY." HIGH PRIEST'S PRECIOUS STONES. URIM AND THUMMIM. POMEGRANATES.

THE Jews were in the midst of the vast masses of heathendom ; they were set apart to be a people to reflect the character and holiness, and to maintain the worship, of the living and the true God. Their tendency, as their whole history shows, was to borrow from surrounding nations, wherever there was an opening that would enable them to do so ; and by borrowing the customs of the heathen, they came by and by to fall into the practices of the heathen also. God, therefore, in order to preserve this nation, and to leave no opening, or creek, or cranny, or nook, by which there could be the admission of anything extrinsic, foreign, or heathen, laid down these minute, these excessively minute specifications, that the people might in all things have a law, a rule, and a guide, to act by. You can see, therefore, in this, what you will see in a wall round a garden ; there are single bricks, that one fancies very trifling in themselves, and that we do not see the use of, but

each has its purpose, and usefulness, and design. In a hedge round an enclosure there are some stakes, some props, some bits that seem unnecessary, and only for ornament; but they all have their use and their design. So in these regulations; they are part and parcel of a great and universal whole. God chose the Israelites, as a nation, distinct from the rest of the nations of the earth, and kept them, in spite of the all-encompassing deluge of wickedness and idolatry, nationally a chosen generation, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood. That would be one explanation, and so far it is a just one; but there is an ultimate object and a typical reference in everything that is here. We can see the typical import of it in certain great things; and though we cannot see it in all the minute things, yet that may be, not because they are dark, but because we are in darkness; not because they have no light, but because we are not able to comprehend and to see them. And no one can read the whole of these arrangements about the high priest, and these regulations about the tabernacle economy, and then compare with them the Epistle to the Hebrews, without seeing that no chance could have made Christ in all things so minutely to correspond to them; and that nothing but a preconcerted arrangement on God's part, to set forth the Saviour, under types, and figures, and shadows, to the Jews, could have made the harmony between Christ, the end of the law, and the shadows that prefigured him.

Now, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, we are told that we have a great High Priest, who was in all things tempted as we are, yet without sin; and who

has passed into the heavenly place, or into the true holy place, to appear before God for us. And when you recollect how Christ is spoken of in the Epistle to the Hebrews, you will see here scattered points, that are evidently parts of his glory, rise into light; and by the media of which the pious Jew saw Christ from afar, and anticipated that blessed day which it was permitted to Simeon to enter on; when he should see Him who is the light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.

The robes that are here laid down for the high priest are extremely elaborate, very magnificent; the only ones that approach to them that I know of in modern times are the robes of the Romish priesthood. This, however, does not prove that the robes of the Romish priesthood are scriptural, because they are worn in imitation of the ancient robes of the high priest; for, instead of being scriptural,—though it may seem a startling announcement,—they are quite the reverse; because, if the substance be come, the shadow is to pass away—if the reality be arrived, that which prefigured him is done away—and, therefore, to draw from the wardrobe of Aaron, in order to decorate the modern Christian minister, is to act as if eighteen centuries were expunged, and we were living under the Levitical *regime*, instead of under the Christian and New Testament economy.

It is quite plain, therefore, that while it may seem scriptural to copy these robes in a modern church, it is, in reality, most unchristian to do so, simply on the ground that they had their meaning, their object, and their end then; but now, that their end is come, they have passed away. The moment that Jesus

said, "It is finished," Aaron, Levi, and all their economy passed away; they were buried with Jesus; only Jesus rose, and they remain still in the grave.

These robes were very precious. These robes were for beauty and for glory; and they were meant to set forth the glory, the excellence, the beauty, the perfection of Him whose beauty is not of robes, but moral, and whose glory is not an outer, but an inner one. And thus, in the Christian economy, the intensest simplicity is the greatest sublimity. It is the law now, all great things are simple, all great men are eminently simple. Simplicity is only compatible with true greatness; and wherever real greatness is, there true simplicity will be also. Blaze, spangle, glitter, show, are vulgar, they are not great; and under the Christian economy we do not need these things. Our religion is adorned the most when it is adorned the least. The great poet has truly expressed it, when he says that we do not think of gilding the refined gold, or adding fresh perfume to the violet. So in our religion, in its precious truths, in its grand hopes, there is that intrinsic and real magnificence that it is most beautiful when it is just best seen. How is God most glorified? Not by adding anything to him; but he is glorified in proportion as he is revealed: and so the religion that he has inspired is beautiful just in proportion as it is seen; and whenever you attempt to beautify, you darken—when you attempt to improve, you only destroy.

There was, then, the breast-plate, the ephod, which was a robe extending to the ankles, and the brodered coat, and the mitre, and the girdle; and these were

to be holy garments. The word "holy," I may mention, in the Bible, means set apart to a thing. Now you will be, perhaps, startled, when I tell you that *Kadosh*, which is the Hebrew word for "holy," is applied to a wicked person as well as to a good man. The Hebrew word is translated into the Greek *áγιος*, and it is translated into the Latin "sacer." Those who have read the Latin poet, will recollect the *auri sacra fames*, which would be, literally translated, "the sacred thirst of gold," a rendering that would be absurd; it means, "the accursed thirst of gold." So in the Hebrew, the word which is translated "holy," means simply "dedicated," separated from one use and set to another. Now, the word "holy," as applied to garments, does not imply that there was anything in them intrinsically holy, but it means that they were sequestered, set apart from every-day use to temple, or religious, or spiritual use. The word "holy" was applied to things set apart under the ancient economy; and when applied to Christians, it means persons who are set apart. The humblest believer is as truly consecrated as the highest minister; that is, he is sequestered, set apart from profane and common purposes, to a holy, a spiritual, and a heavenly life.

You will notice, in the next place, that there were to be precious stones; the onyx stone was so called from its resemblance to the root of the human nail on the finger. The onyx stone was to have an engraving upon it. Then there was to be the topaz, the carbuncle, the diamond, the emerald, the sapphire, and other stones, which are also alluded to in the Apocalypse, and which I believe are so far iden-

tical with the stones that are called by these names now. It is singular that one stone is here called the amethyst. It was called so from the superstition that prevailed that it would cure drunkenness. It means not intoxicated; and it was supposed that if this stone was put into a drunkard's cup, it would prevent drunkenness. Hence the name which was applied to it.

It was a precious stone; still, I believe, of great value, and was one of those that were on the high priest's breast-plate.

Then upon these stones there were to be engraved the names of the twelve tribes of Israel; and when the high priest went into the holy place, he was to have these stones upon his heart, and the names of the tribes beautifully cut or engraved upon them. Does not this show the exact correspondence between the high priest of the Israelites and the Great High Priest, and that the one was the prefiguration of the other? We read that Jesus has entered, not into the holy place made with hands, but into the true holy place, there to appear in heaven for us. Jesus appears now in heaven, bearing, not upon the stones, however precious, from which the engraving may be wasted and worn, but bearing upon his heart the names, not of tribes nor of nations, but of every individual believer, however humble, who has washed his robes and made them white in the efficacy of his precious sacrifice.

When the high priest went into the holy place, he was to have upon his breast-plate the "Urim and the Thummim." The literal translation of these words is "lights and perfections." It has been a

great dispute among the Jewish Rabbis, as also among Christian commentators, whether the "Urim and the Thummim" were not the same, or identical with the precious stones that contained the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. At all events, it was something upon his breast—either these stones, or some special robe that he wore upon his breast when he went into the holy of holies, where he received from God—from the Shechinah, or the glory that dwelt between the cherubim—answers to his difficulties, directions for the government of the nation, promises, comforts, truths; all that Israel needed. These words are frequently alluded to in other parts of the Bible. For instance, Jesus Christ is called "light." That is evidently an allusion to this; and many of the robes of the high priest are alluded to significantly in the New Testament, if not by their names, by words corresponding to their meaning.

Then, when the high priest went into the holy of holies, he was to have "a golden bell and a pomegranate;" the fringe of his robe was hung with pomegranates and bells—small bells—and the object of this, it is supposed by the Rabbis, was to let the people know that when he went into the holy of holies, he was still alive. The Jews had the idea that, to see God and to die, was almost the one the necessary result of the other. No one but the high priest alone, and he only once a year, was permitted to go into the holy of holies, where was the Shechinah, or the bright, supernatural glory that burned upon the mercy-seat, between the cherubim; and they say, that the tinkling of the bells inside was the evidence to the people that the high priest was

still alive. We read in the Psalms, "Oh, blessed are the people that know the joyful sound;" that phrase is borrowed from the fact, that the tinkling of the bells of the high priest in the holy of holies was to every Jew a most joyful sound, because it was proof to him that the sacrifice offered without was accepted, and that the high priest was interceding within. But where were the Jews when the high priest was within? They were all waiting outside, till the high priest should come forth and bless them. That is just our position now. Jesus has offered up a sacrifice once for all on the cross; he is now in the holy of holies, with the names of all his people on his heart, pleading for us; and the joyful sound, or the preached gospel, still in our ears, is the evidence to us that Christ has entered within the veil, and we are waiting outside till the High Priest shall come forth, as he will do soon, and pronounce that grand and lasting benediction that will strike down into nature's heart, and make her very deserts to rejoice, and her bleakest and her most solitary places to blossom even as the rose.

The pomegranate was a fruit with which you are all acquainted; it has a sort of pulpy substance inside, a little larger than an orange, and is full of seeds; and in fact the origin of the word *pomegranate* is *pomum granatum*, that means an apple with a great many seeds in it. And pomegranates were the symbol of fruitfulness, and were the sign to the Jews—the constant sign—that the whole earth should yet be covered with Christ's glory, and all flesh see his salvation.

Upon the high priest's mitre there was the in-

scription, "Holiness to the Lord," which was meant to denote how completely he was sequestered to God; how truly he was dedicated to *him*; and that holiness to God was the great end and object of that economy of which he was the chief.

The following very instructive descriptions are from Bush, the American commentator:—

1. SARDIUS. Heb. אדם *odem*, from the radical אדם *adam*, to be ruddy or red. Chal. סמקן *samkan*, and סמקתא *samketha*, red. Gr. σαρδιον, *sardine*, a name supposed to be taken from *Sardis* or *Sardinia*, where it was originally found. It was a stone of the *ruby* class, and answers to the *carnelian* of the moderns. The finest specimens now come from *Surat*, a city near the gulf of *Cambay*, in *India*.

2. TOPAZ. Heb. פסדה *pitdah*. Etymology unknown. Gr. τσπαζιον, *topazion*, a name which *Pliny* says is derived from *Topazos*, an island in the *Red Sea*. Chal. ירקן *yarkan* and ירקתא *yarketha*, signifying *green*. It is supposed to be the modern *chrysolite*, and its colour to have been a transparent *green-yellow*. It comes now from *Egypt*, where it is found in alluvial strata.

3. CARBUNCLE. Heb. ברקת *bareketh*, from ברק *barak*, to lighten, glitter, or glister; answering to the ἀνθραξ, *anthrax*, of the *Greeks*, so called because when held to the sun it resembles a piece of bright burning charcoal. Indeed its name *carbuncle* means a little coal, and refers us at once to a lively coal-red. Its modern name is the *garnet*. The *Septuagint*, *Josephus*, and *Lat. Vulgate* have rendered in this place by σμαραγδος, *smaragdos*, *emerald*. But this is more properly the rendering of the next in order. The *carbuncle* and the *emerald* have in fact in some way become transposed in the *Greek* version.

4. EMERALD. Heb. נפק *nophek*. Gr. ἀνθραξ. This gem is undoubtedly the same with the ancient *smaragdos*, or *emerald*, one of the most beautiful of all the precious stones. It is characterized by a bright green colour, with scarcely any mixture, though differing somewhat in degrees. The true *Oriental*.

emerald is now very scarce. The best that are at present accessible are from Peru. In the time of Moses they came from India.

5. SAPPHIRE. Heb. ספיר *sappir*. Gr. *σαπφειρος*, *sapphiros*. The word is very nearly the same in all known languages, and as to the sapphire itself it is, after the diamond, the most valuable of the gems, exceeding all others in lustre and hardness. It is of a *sky-blue*, or *fine azure* colour, in all the choicest specimens, though other varieties occur. Indeed among practical jewellers it is a name of wider application perhaps than that of any of the rest of the precious stones. Pliny says that in his time the best sapphires came from Media. At present they are found in greater or less perfection in nearly every country.

6. DIAMOND. Heb. יהלם *yahalom*, from הלם *halam*, to beat, to smite upon, so called from its extraordinary hardness, by which like a hammer it will beat to pieces any of the other sorts of stones. Thus the Greeks called the diamond *αδαμας*, *adamas*, from Gr. α, not, and δαμαω, *damao*, to subdue, on account of its supposed invincible hardness. Accordingly Pliny says of diamonds, that "they are found to resist a stroke on the anvil to such a degree that the iron itself gives way and the anvil is shattered to pieces." This is no doubt exaggerated and fabulous, but it is sufficient to justify the propriety of the Hebrew name, that diamonds are much harder than other precious stones, and in this all are agreed. This quality of the diamond, together with its incomparable brilliancy, renders it by far the most valuable of all the gems. The Gr. here has *ιασπης*, *jaspis*, or *jasper*.

7. FIGURE. Heb. לֶשֶׁם *leshem*. Gr. *λιγυριον*, *ligurion*. This is one of the most doubtful of the precious stones as to colour. It is supposed to be closely related to the *hyacinth* (*jacinth*) of the moderns, which is a red strongly tinged with orange-yellow.

8. AGATE. Heb. שֶׁבִי *shebo*. Gr. *αχατης*, *achates*, *agate*. This is a stone of a great variety of hues, which is thought by some to be identical with the *chrysopras*, and if so it is probable that a golden-green was the predominant colour.

9. AMETHYST. Heb. אֶחְלָמָה *ahlamah*. Gr. *αμεθυστος*, *ame-*

thystos, from α, *not*, and μεθυστος, *drunken*, because wine drank from an amethyst cup was supposed by the ancients to prevent *inebriation*. The oriental amethyst is a transparent gem, the colour of which seems to be composed of a *strong blue* and a *deep red*; and according as either prevails, affording different tinges of *purple*, and sometimes even fading to a *rose colour*. It comes from Persia, Arabia, Armenia, and the East Indies.

10. BERYL. Heb. טַרְשִׁישׁ *tarshish*. Gr. χρυσολιθος, *chrysolithos*. A pellucid gem of a *sea* or *bluish-green*. But if, as many mineralogists and critics suppose, the *beryl* is the same as the *chrysolite*, it is a gem of *yellowish-green* colour, and ranks at present among the *topazes*.

11. ONYX. Heb. שׁוֹהַם *shoham*; called *onyx* from Gr. ονυξ, *onyx*, from the resemblance of its ground colour to that lunated spot at the base of the human *nail*, which the Greek word signifies. It is a semi-pellucid stone of a fine flinty texture, of a *waterish sky-coloured* ground, variegated with bands of *white* and *brown*, which run parallel to each other. It is here rendered by the Gr. βηρυλλιον, *beryllion*, *beryl*, from some apparent confusion in the order of the names. See Note on Gen. ii. 12.

12. JASPER. Heb. יָסָפֶה *yashepheh*. Gr. ονυχιον, *onuchion*. The similarity of the Hebrew name has determined most critics to consider the *jasper* as the gem intended by this designation. This is a stone distinguished by such a vast variety of hues, that it is extremely hazardous to fix upon any one as its distinguishing colour. The brown Egyptian variety is conjectured to have been the one selected for the breast-plate.

CHAPTER XXIX.

NO NEW TESTAMENT LEVITICUS. APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION.
OFFERINGS FOR THE PRIESTS. RETURN OF THE JEWS.

I STATED, in the course of previous explanatory remarks, that one reason, at least, for the very minute details respecting the ceremonial offerings of Aaron and his sons—the consecration of the altar, the form of robe, and the accompaniments of all the services that were to be on that altar—is, that the children of Israel, who were set apart for the specific purpose of being a model nation to all mankind, and the conservators of God's Word to successive generations, were to be preserved from contact with everything like heathenism, and to be kept in the most striking way from incorporating into their worship anything that was not instituted and ordained by God. If a single opening had been left in these regulations of Levi, that opening would have been filled up by some rite or custom borrowed from heathendom, and that rite, or custom, or ceremony, thus borrowed, would have been a medium of connexion between the holy Jew and the profane Gentile, and have led to the desecration of the one, and not to the consecration or conversion of the other.

Do we not also gather from this another very important lesson—that if God had designed that

in the New Testament economy there should be only one form of worship, one form of ecclesiastical polity—whether that form be Episcopacy, Presbytery, or Congregationalism—if it had been God's mind that the whole church should agree and correspond as minutely, in every rite, as the ancient church in all the jots and tittles of the requirements of Levi, would he, in the announcement of this dispensation, have omitted to lay down as minutely all those regulations for the government of the New Testament Church in all generations? But the very fact that we have no Leviticus of the New Testament—the very fact that we have no such rules laid down there—is positive demonstration that God never meant that all his people should worship publicly in precisely the same manner and form, or that they should all be under the same ecclesiastical rule. He has laid down great doctrinal truths, exceedingly distinctly defined; but he has left discipline in a latitudinarianism that is as beautiful as it is instructive to us respecting his mind and will concerning us. I never yet could discover in the New Testament either the Church of England, or the Church of Scotland, or any of the dissenting bodies. I can find in the New Testament great, broad government laws; I can see that there were always to be taught and teachers; I can see there were always to be sacraments; I can see there was to be a Sabbath; that there was to be public worship and the reading of God's holy Word in public; I can see a reason for the existence of a visible Church, and in such a Church there must be some order, some design, so that when you come into the sanctuary you shall

not be at your wits' end what is the form or the custom of the place; and that there should be a governing power, whether it be in the Archbishop or in the General Assembly—I say that this is most proper, most expedient, most reasonable; but I cannot discover in the New Testament that an apostolical succession, or an order of bishops, or gradations of Presbyteries, are vital elements of the constitution of the Christian Church. And here, speaking of that very thing—apostolical succession—you will notice, that Aaron and his sons, and their sons' sons, most rigidly traced their succession, and their names were all enrolled in the public lists; and the succession of the Aaronitic priesthood was so certain a thing that nobody could doubt it, and the most significant and unmistakeable rules were laid down to regulate it. But we have no such thing kept up in the New Testament. Does it tell you there that no minister has a true ministry unless he can trace his genealogy up to Peter or to Paul? The thing is not once mentioned; and yet an Apostle actually condescends to such minute requirements in a minister as that he should not be given to much wine, that he should not be given to striking, that he should be the husband of one wife—he descends to such minute points of character, but he does not once mention, what is now thought vastly greater, the apostolical succession. Would he have omitted so vital a thing, if indeed it had been a vital thing at all? But I perfectly agree with Archbishop Whately—one of the most powerful minds of the present day—who, I hear, has offered a considerable sum to any priest or presbyter upon earth

—Romish, Anglican, Scotch, or Irish—who will trace his succession within a dozen lives of any one of the Apostles whatever. Now, it is strange, if a large sum can be so easily obtained, that those priests who say that they have the true apostolical succession, and can prove it, do not come forward and claim the reward. If I could demonstrate it, I would certainly claim it; and it is very strange that those who say that they have the apostolical succession, yet will not put forth their hands and be made rich at so little labour and so little inconvenience. The fact is, there is no such thing. It is a devout dream. For instance, there is in Scotland, as you have all heard, what is called the Scotch Episcopal Church, consisting of seventy or eighty ministers and two or three bishops; and professing to be a sort of intermediate Church, between the Church of Rome and the Church of England. Now that Church prides itself upon having the apostolical succession. But in this respect it is the most defective Church in existence. Three Scotch presbyters came to be consecrated bishops, and the bishops of England recognised these presbyters as brethren, and on that footing they were consecrated bishops. But according to the Tractarian notion, they were not regenerated, and therefore they could not be made presbyters. They were not, therefore, presbyters at all. Those who came to be consecrated bishops were first baptized and ordained by presbyters of the Scotch Church. But Scotch Church baptism is no baptism at all—therefore they were not regenerated, therefore they were not Christians, they were also not true presbyters, and therefore they could not be bishops,

therefore they had not the apostolical succession at all.* But the fact is, that there is no such thing as the apostolical succession, in the Tractarian sense; it is pure nonsense. The Aaronitic priesthood continued in uninterrupted succession until the coming of Christ; and when Christ came it passed away.

But even supposing that the apostolical succession could be clearly traced by the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, or the Church of Ireland, what would be the worth of it. What was the doctrinal worth of the Aaronitic succession—a most uninterrupted succession, a succession sanctioned by God himself—a chain that stretched from Aaron, in Exodus, down to Caiaphas, the last high priest—what was the result of it? Priests that had the Aaronitic succession gave up the Son of God—preferred Barabbas, a thief and a murderer, to the Lord of glory, and imbrued their hands in his blood, and did not know when their own Lord came to be the Saviour of mankind. What was the doctrinal efficacy of it. Literally nothing. And what is the fact now? Go into Belgium, and you will see that when the priests put on their robes they are almost worshipped; but the instant they lay them aside the people treat them with the greatest contempt. Go to any minister who preaches about his own succession, and you will see that he is the most unpopular man in the parish; but go to a man who preaches Christ, and himself their servant for Christ's sake,

* If it be said the first consecration was rectified by a subsequent, I reply, the last three Scotch presbyters after being consecrated went to Scotland, and consecrated presbyterian clergymen to be bishops, and so vitiated the whole stream.

and who lives purely and consistently, and you will find that God sets his seal to his servant, by making him the most esteemed as well as the most useful and the most devoted to his cause. If I wanted to destroy a Church, I would make its ministers preach their succession, not Christ; if I wanted a Church to be universal, I would say, Preach Christ, and say nothing about yourself; depend upon it that if you mind the Master's glory, the blessed Master will take care of your Church and of your concerns.

The first thing that we read of in this chapter, is the description of the offerings that were to be offered when the priests were consecrated. This is explained by a text in the Epistle to the Hebrews—that these priests of Aaron had first to offer for themselves, and then for the people. But Jesus—in his contrast to them—having no sin, had not to offer for himself; he was holy, spotless, and blameless, before the people.

We next read of the consecration of the altar, and all the accompaniments of that consecration. We have then the two lambs—a lamb to be offered in the morning, and a lamb to be offered in the evening, as the daily sacrifice. How beautifully does that remind us of what John said, “Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.” This was an allusion to the lamb that was offered every morning and every evening; and it is supposed that when John said these words it was early in the morning, and that the lamb was being taken to the temple for the morning sacrifice; and the people, looking at the lamb as it was being carried to the holy place, and looking on it re-

verently, John said to them, "Behold, not that lamb—this morning and evening lamb—this is now done away ; behold *the* Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world,"—that is, the Lord Jesus Christ.

At the close of the chapter, we have a very beautiful promise made to the children of Israel, which, I believe, still remains to be fulfilled ; where God says, "I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am the Lord their God." And in the forty-third verse : "And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory." The promise was, that they should return to their own land, and that God should dwell among them ; this was not fulfilled in their exodus from Babylon, and there is no evidence that this promise has yet been fulfilled. I believe that it was partly fulfilled at that time, but that the chief part of it yet remains to be fulfilled. For instance, the prophet Zechariah, referring to the Jews, says, "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion ; for, lo ! I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people : and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the Lord shall inherit Judah, his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again." Now, this book was written by Zechariah after the captivity, and therefore the prophecy still remained to

be fulfilled. And you have the very same prophecy in Ezekiel xxxvii. 21, where he says, "Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms"—as they are now—"any more at all; neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David, my servant, shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob, my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever; and my servant David shall be their prince for ever." You have the very same thing repeated in Ezekiel xliii., at the fourth verse, where he says: "And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate, whose prospect is toward the east. So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house. And I heard him speaking unto me, out of the house; and the man stood by me. And he said unto

me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile ; neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcases of their kings in their high places. In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed : wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger. Now, let them put away their whoredom, and the carcases of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever." Now, all these promises are to me clear evidence that the Jews are to return to their own country. And the more spiritual a Jew becomes, the less he desires to have political position among the nations of the earth. Whether the present regulations with regard to the Jews are right or wrong, it is the worldly, and not the spiritual, Jew who desires such honours. Those who do not yet see their way to embrace the Messiah, but to whom, as waiting and longing, the Messiah, as to Simeon, will yet be revealed, have their hearts, not in England, but in Palestine. I believe we are on the very verge of an exodus more majestic than was witnessed from Egypt to Palestine ; and that, as soon as Turkey falls—and all the kings of the earth may prop it up as they please, but it will fall soon—for it has been decreed that in a very short time the great river Euphrates shall be dried up ; and, as soon as the crescent wanes, then God's ancient people

will return to the land of their fathers, and restore Jerusalem to a greater splendour than was ever witnessed before ; and then Jesus—who is David, their king—shall reveal himself to them. And if their fall was the benefit of the Gentiles, what shall their return be but as life from the dead ?

CHAPTER XXX.

LEVITICAL AND EVANGELICAL WORSHIP. GOLDEN ALTAR.
ANGEL BY THE GOLDEN ALTAR. ATONEMENT FOR GOLDEN
ALTAR. WASHINGS. HOLY OIL. ALL NATURE TAINTED.

I EXPLAINED, in the course of my remarks upon the chapters that immediately precede this, that all this minute regulation was necessary to a people not sufficiently enlightened, and prepared, wherever there was an opening for it, to admit idolatrous and extraneous rites of the surrounding nations; and, therefore, that there might be no excuse or apology for borrowing from the heathen a single rite, God laid down minutely every regulation, built up every interstice with his own Divine prescription, and made Leviticus one solid and compact whole, full of complete rites and observances for this rebellious, obdurate, and so often, and so painfully, wavering people.

In this chapter, we have a succession of additional rites and prescriptions by God himself, for special parts of his worship. Now, it would, in one sense, be most scriptural for any Church to adopt all the material rites that are here laid down—burning incense, anointing with oil, washing, as you enter the sanctuary, with holy water, having an altar for it; all this would, in one sense, be most scriptural—

that is, in the letter it would be so ; but, in the spirit of Scripture, it would be a gross apostasy from the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. The whole Levitical economy was a system of various observances, intended, like dark shadows, to indicate the approach of the sun, whose rise should dispel the shadows, and necessarily take their place ; and, therefore, every rite that was instituted in Leviticus had its moral or spiritual significance ; and he acts scripturally, and that Church is the most scriptural, that lets alone the material incense and the material holy water, and washes his hands in innocency, and has the unction of the Holy One, and lifts up, not incense that the outer sense can appreciate, but the incense of pure affection, loving hearts, joyful and thankful praise to the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. So that you will see how wrong it is to quote literally a portion of Scripture, in order to justify a practice, while really, understood as it should be understood, it condemns the practice altogether. The fact is, take away the New Testament, and then all this will be proper enough ; but add the New Testament, and then the material gives way to the moral ; and God, a Spirit in the days of Levi, just as he is a Spirit now, and to be worshipped both in spirit and in truth—but then in limited formulas ; now, neither on this mountain nor on that, but wherever there is a spiritual mind, there there may be offered spiritual worship through Christ Jesus.

The first thing that comes before us here is the golden altar. You will recollect the fact—and nothing, I believe, is more instructive to a Christian

than these material institutions of Levi, provided you allow the light of the Sun of Righteousness to shine upon them—you will recollect, I say, the fact, that there was first of all the altar of brass, on which burnt propitiatory sacrifices were offered. Then, there is here the golden altar—inlaid and covered over with gold—on which incense was burnt, and from which that incense arose, as a sweet perfume to God. Now, the two altars were thus intended to designate one grand truth—that, first of all, there is a sacrifice without the gate which Jesus offered, and which was perfected when he exclaimed upon the cross, “It is finished;” and then, when he had offered the sacrifice without—by which your sins and my sins are blotted out—he entered within the holy place, and now presents the prayers of his people with intercession and pleading beside his Father who is in heaven. The brazen altar answers to Christ’s atonement without the camp; the golden altar corresponds to Christ’s offering our praises and our prayers, purified with the incense of his own merits, in the presence of God, and in glory for ever. Hence, in Revelations viii. we read: “And another angel came and stood at the altar”—that is, evidently, the altar of incense,—“having a golden censer,”—used for perfume,—“and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it, with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne.” Now, the high priest alone had a golden censer; the common priests had silver ones; and to this priest-angel, who is none else than Jesus Christ, the Angel of the Covenant, who with the golden censer stood beside the golden altar

—"there was given much incense"—his own precious merits—"that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints"—not as a celebrated Roman Catholic dignitary has interpreted it, that saints in heaven could join with him in supplicating for us on earth; but it is, that he should offer the prayers of all saints. Who are saints? Not those that the Pope canonizes, and proclaims to be in heaven; but those that the Holy Spirit consecrates and leaves on earth. Every epistle in the New Testament is addressed to the saints at Rome, at Philippi, &c., &c., to the people set apart by God to become Christians; and this Angel, or Christ, offers in his censer his own incense of merit with our prayers; it being a sad and sorrowful fact, that our purest prayers have so much alloy of imperfection, that unless placed in the golden censer of the Great High Priest, and presented amid the perfume of his own blessed intercession, they never could cleave the skies, or draw down an answer of mercy and of peace. But how blessed is the thought that, for all our sins—the sins of every day—we have a perfect atonement, finished on the altar of brass without; for all our shortcomings and defects every day, our imperfect prayers, our imperfect praises, we have One who is by the golden altar with the golden censer, and who finds admission for the least petition that an orphan utters, and for the loftiest want that an archangel feels. Thus, the golden altar was the symbol of Christ's ceaseless intercession; and on that altar, Aaron—that is, the high priest through successive generations—was to burn incense.

But it is a very striking phase in this history, that

it says in the tenth verse, that Aaron should make an atonement upon the horns of it. How strange ! There was no atonement upon it, as upon the altar of brass ; but, to indicate that that economy was altogether imperfect, and that there needed to be an atonement offered for the prayers, for the intercessions of the high priest himself, once a year, upon the great day of atonement, the golden altar itself had the horns touched with atoning blood, to show that those sacrifices that were offered year by year could never make the comers thereto perfect, could never take away sin—and to make all Israel, from its inmost heart, long and yearn for a more perfect sacrifice, which, once offered, takes away sin, and which needs no atonement ; for it is in itself infinitely perfect and complete.

We then read of the “laver of brass,” with water in it, in which the priests were to wash before they approached the altar. Now, it might be literally scriptural if you were to have a font, with what is called “holy water,” at the door, and to sprinkle yourself with it before you come into the congregation ; but it would be most unchristian ; and to quote this passage as a reason for it really is to misquote and abuse God’s holy Word. This was right then ; but, because it was right then, it is wrong now. The end of it is come : when the flower blossoms, the petals die ; when the fruit is formed, the blossom withers and drops ; when the antitype is come, the type goes ; and to copy the type now, to imitate the type now, is practically to cancel the last 1800 years, and conclude the end is not come, and to say, “We are not in Christ, but we

are under Levi, and still subject to bondage." Then, what is meant by this washing now? It is what the Psalmist says very beautifully, "I will wash mine hands in innocency." In what innocence? In that blood—the only innocent thing in God's universe—that was to be for the remission of the sins of the guilty. Hence, all those allusions in the New Testament—"the washing of water," "the renewing of the Holy Ghost." The Apostle's expression, "washing of water," is not in reference to baptism, but in reference to this; and he is using Levitical language to convey a New Testament or a grand Christian truth—namely, that God loves those to approach him in worship, not who wear the most splendid robes, not who have the greatest wealth, or power, or position; but the clean hands, and the clean hearts, and those that give up neither hand nor heart to vanity, but who serve God in spirit and in truth.

We have, next, the holy anointing oil, composed of the most precious elements combined together; and this holy anointing oil was applied to everything, to indicate that everything was impure, and needed to be consecrated.

What does all this teach us? It teaches us that all creation, all created things, are tainted. The beautiful flowers that burst from the earth, the grand trees that wave in the sunshine and in the storm, rock and crystal, river and ocean, all that is minute, all that is great—all have the taint of man's transgression; for when man sinned against God, all nature felt the effects of his sin, and was dragged down with him. But, just as everything here was

consecrated by that outward oil, so we believe that not consecrating oil, but a consecrating hand, shall one day be waved over all creation ; and then nature shall be restored to her first beauty, and all things, however tainted by sin now, shall be made holy ; and all hearts, thus made holy, shall be made happy, and a better Paradise shall close the world than the Paradise that commenced it.

CHAPTER XXXI.

RECAPITULATION. PERSONS INSPIRED TO EXECUTE THE DIVINE PLAN. GIFTS AND GRACES NOT ALWAYS UNITED. EDUCATION. SECULAR TEACHING IN INDIA. THE SABBATH AND SANCTUARY WORK. SABBATH AND CRYSTAL PALACE.

THIS last chapter contains the words that were addressed to Moses at the close of the forty days' sojourn on the Mount, in intimate personal communion with God. It is also a summary of all the institutions and the furniture of the tabernacle, which God so minutely specified in the previous chapters, and of which I have already given a sufficiently plain exposition. He states that, in order to promote all these elaborate arrangements, the exquisitely chased golden candlestick that was to be in the holy of holies, the mercy-seat, the cherubim that were to overshadow it with their wings, to indicate the desire that the angels have to look into those things—the vail that was to separate the holy of holies from the holy place—the curtains, and all the other ornaments of the tabernacle, God raised up “Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah,” to execute and complete. Now just notice here:—God gave the plan clearly, graphically, distinctly, to Moses; but it needed men raised up specially by the Spirit of God to execute the plan, and to give it prac-

tical development. And we learn from this fact, that a gifted intellect is as much the creation of the Spirit of God as a regenerate heart. Gifts are from God as truly as graces: it needs the guidance of God's good Spirit to enable a man "to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them; and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship;" just as it does to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. A great intellect, I repeat, is as much the gift of God, as a holy and sanctified heart is from the grace of God; only we must always remember that the two are not necessarily combined; that the latter—the sanctified heart—is saving; but that the former—the gifted intellect—may be an element of ruin, not of everlasting blessedness in the sight of God. Many men have transcendent gifts, that shed new light upon the world by their splendour, who, at the same time, have hearts sunk in depravity, and wickedness, and sin. They have been raised to heaven by the greatness of their gifts; they sink themselves to ruin by the degeneracy of their lives. Far better have a holy heart, and a very ungifted intellect, than have the most gigantic mind, but have a depraved heart to wield and to make use of it. I know no combination more terrible in this world, than to have an archangel's wisdom, but to have a fiend's depravity to make use of it; and I can conceive no education more mischievous in this world, than the education which cultivates the intellect to the utmost, but leaves the heart to its own inherent and fallen tendencies and propensities. Education is not storing man's memory with historical facts, or with scientific laws;

nor is it cultivating and sharpening man's intellect by constant usage; but while it is this, it is also sanctifying man's heart by that knowledge which is not only power, but is also holiness and peace: and I cannot conceive a greater calamity to happen to a nation, than to teach it this world's wisdom by the master-spirits of the day, but to have nobody to give it that teaching—the unction of the Holy One, the sanctifying truths that sweeten all other knowledge, and make it not only light to direct through the intricacies of science, but life to sustain in the hopes and prospects of everlasting joy in the presence of God. Never, therefore, my dear friends, either countenance yourselves, or sanction, directly or indirectly, any teaching that is not accompanied by, based on, and saturated with, living, true, spiritual Christianity. Not that we fear knowledge; I know that it is far better to have a people instructed only in secular wisdom, than to have a people lying in the depths of intellectual ignorance; but then, I think, when we can have both the light that shows, and the grace that directs, we ought never to be satisfied with the one without possessing the other also. In some countries, it is more light that is needed. In India, for instance, I believe education and science are most needed. I would send more teachers, if I could, to instruct the Hindoos in science alone. If I can get them to educate in Christianity, too, then by all means let them do it; but one would rather have education there in science alone, than no teaching at all; and for this special reason,—that the whole Hindoo religion is a composite of scientific absurdities, as well as religious untruths; and that

man who proves to a Hindoo that an eclipse of the moon will take place on a certain day, or that an eclipse of the sun will happen at a certain hour, does not only correct a scientific misapprehension on the part of that Hindoo, but he also destroys a dogma of his religion and his creed; and when you do this, you convey to his mind the necessary result that his religion altogether is wrong; for if one dogma of it is clearly proved to be uninspired, you show that the whole edifice must crumble and fall together. And therefore to prove this to him is good; but whilst this is done by the mere teacher of secular knowledge, the Church of Christ ought to follow him up with the teaching of that knowledge which is life everlasting. We thus see, that God gives light to the intellect, as well as grace to the heart; and we may, perhaps, from this learn a very humbling, but a very blessed truth—that the man with a gifted intellect is as much summoned to bow the knee, and to thank the Fountain and the Author of it, as the man that has a sanctified heart feels it his privilege to bow his knee, and to bless the Holy Spirit that gave it, for this his distinguishing grace and mercy.

After recapitulating all those things which these artisans were raised up to construct, God reverts to his Law, referring to the law repeatedly stated before, respecting the Sabbath. Now just notice that, he warns them, while telling them that they were thus to accomplish and complete the furniture of the tabernacle, that they were, at the same time, not to go on with this work upon the Sabbath-day. Now mark you, the work that He assigned to Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, was essen-

tially a sacred work; but He says, Though it be so, you are not to carry on that work upon the Sabbath-day. For instance, now, to study God's wisdom in the beautiful flowers of the field,—to study his beneficence in all the laws that regulate living organisms,—is so far a divine work; but yet it is work that belongs to the week-day: it does not specifically belong to the Sabbath. The six days of the week are for teaching what God the Creator is; but there is one day in the week that ought to be specially devoted to inquire what God the Redeemer has done. Let Saturday, if you like, be for the commemoration of creation-work; but let the Sabbath-days be consecrated to the study of Redemption-work. And hence, to build a church is a sacred work. But it would be just as wicked to build churches on Sunday, as to build theatres. It is not the end of a work that will vindicate that work, upon a day on which it is not proper: that day has its own peculiar service, it is sanctified to its own peculiar study. And you may depend upon it, that those who are trying to teach the working man to give up the Sabbath to worldly amusements and enjoyment, are taking away from him stealthily, it may be unintentionally, his best and his most precious birthright. Once take the Sabbath off its divine foundation, and say it is lawful to go to the Crystal Palace for amusement on the Sabbath, instead of going to the house of God, and the next step in these avaricious, grinding days will be, "Well, you admit that the Sabbath has no divine warrant; why should you have one day out of the seven for play, when we want to have you do more in the workshop?" If the Sabbath be once

taken from the service of God, you may depend upon it that it cannot long be kept from the drudgery and slavery of Mammon. At the same time, I have always felt, in reference to that subject about which so much has been said, and so much wrongly said, that we cannot practically maintain the Sabbath for the Christian instruction of the people of this country, unless we contrive to give them Saturday, or a portion of Saturday, for a holiday. You may depend upon it, that Christian people who love the Sabbath will never give it up; but many think that the minister of the gospel, in advocating the claims of the Sabbath, is only trying to keep a congregation for himself, which he is conscious that he cannot interest or amuse, and therefore he is afraid that they should go and be better amused elsewhere than in the house of God. But when we know, looking at this great city with its nearly three millions of inhabitants, that there are men toiling in it from six, from seven o'clock in the morning till eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, at night; some in under-ground cellars, others in miserable garrets, never breathing a breath of fresh air, forgetting what flowers are, or how they smell, or how green grass looks;—I say, when we think of this, it appears most cruel to say to these men, You shall never go out on the only day on which it is possible for you to see the flowers, and to breathe the fresh air. And when we feel that we cannot give up the Sabbath, because it is a divine institution—when we feel that the fourth commandment is a law that we never can compromise—when we feel that the soul of man demands it, we may say to those men that are attempting the desecration of

the Sabbath, "You just give up a little of your six days; let your young men free every Saturday at two o'clock; let them go and enjoy the flowers, and breathe the fresh air, and visit the Crystal Palace, which will be worth any one's while to visit, and in which there will be much that is fitted to instruct and to edify, and much that is good. Do this. Just take a little from the exactions of Mammon, but do not intrude upon the holy day of God." The injunction that is by many laid upon the working man is this:—"You may trespass upon God's day as you like; but you must not trespass, for the life of you, upon Mammon's." Now you say, "We will not trespass upon God's day, we will dedicate it to its right ends; we believe in its divine foundation; but we do insist upon your giving up a portion of a week-day; and you may depend upon it that you will not be one whit poorer, or in any degree the loser, and we shall be richer; you will do that which will not rob you, and which will make us rich indeed." Of course all that I have said upon this subject assumes that the Sabbath is still obligatory upon man: I do not attempt to prove it here, though it is very easily done. It has always been found, that the instant the Sabbath is sacrificed to pleasure, that moment the sanctuary loses all its blessings, and a nation retrogrades and sinks in all that dignifies and beautifies a land. Just take the Sabbath as it is in parts of Prussia; see the Sabbath as it is there; view it still more so as it is in France; and you will see that the sacrifice of the Sabbath is the sacrifice of one of the most precious springs of Christianity;

and a nation suffers necessarily in consequence in all its interests.

But while we contend for the Sabbath, let us, as ministers of the gospel, try to make the sanctuary so interesting that the people shall find more pleasure in texts than they ever can in the contemplation of the beauties of a Crystal Palace: and let those who keep the Sabbath because they are Christians, show that it is not a day that God has cursed, but a day that God has blessed; let them show that it is not a Pharisaic day, for fasting, and for all that can sadden and make sorrowful; but a day of joy, a delightful day, a day of privilege:—not Jewish, but Christian; and breathing the air and feeling the sunshine of love, and joy, and peace, which are constituent elements of the gospel of Christ.

CHAPTER XXXI.

TABERNACLE FURNITURE.

WE find a summary of all the furniture, about which we have been reading, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in these words:—

“Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.”

HEBREWS ix. 1, 5.

Let me, first of all, explain the connexion of the passage I have read with the argument of the apostle in the previous chapter. He tells them, that the covenant made, or the bargain—if I may use a familiar expression, the arrangement made with God’s people—has passed away, and that “this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put

my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts : and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." And, " In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." This was not merely suited to the people of the day, but suited for the worship of God ; for it had also ordinances, to lead them to the knowledge of the true way of acceptance before God. And it had also a worldly sanctuary. The word " worldly " is not used there in the sense of *sinful*, but in the sense of *material*, *carnal*—what may be touched, and seen, and which is visible.

And then he goes on to notice several of the leading features of the tabernacle, the minute and specific character of which we have now been reading.

It is so very important to explain, that the great end of all the order of Levi, and all the " worldly " ordinances, was plainly to shadow forth, or to give the people of that day, in the infant state of the world, an idea of greater and more glorious things. The Bible is one magnificent and consistent whole ; but it is the history of progress, not of standing still. You see the little ray, scarcely illuminating the night, becoming brighter and brighter, till it ends in the glorious sunshine of open day. You have in this one book all the varied colours of the rainbow—each colour its own definite place to play in, but all colours combined in Christ, constituting the pure light—the Lord Jesus Christ. You have in the Bible all the varied typography. One part, if I may so speak, is written in hieroglyph, another in Saxon character, another in black letter, another

in Greek, another in Hebrew, another in Latin ; but all the varied typography includes and teaches one grand truth—Christ as the end of the law, our Atonement, our Sacrifice, our Prophet, our Priest, our King. Take the Bible from the very beginning to the very end, and you will find the first martyr, Abel, ministering beside the footstool ; the first patriarch, Abraham, going to a country he knew not where ; Aaron standing before the altar ; Moses ministering on the mount ; the holy Psalmist celebrating God's praise ; great prophets proclaiming the advent of the Saviour ; evangelists writing ; apostles arguing ; the seer in the Apocalypse recording, in words, the magnificent drama that swept before his eyes.—all acting, however varied, however apparently conflicting, as the amanuenses of the one Holy Spirit ; each writing his portion, but all giving expression to one grand and blessed testimony. Now, this is not merely a conjecture ; but it is the assertion of our Lord himself, where he says, in speaking to the disciples who were journeying to Emmaus, “ O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken : ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory ? And, beginning at Moses,”—that is, at the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis—“ he expounded unto them, in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself.” And, again, in the forty-fourth verse of the same chapter, “ he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses ”—that is, the Pentateuch, the first five books—“ and in the

prophets,"—the greater and minor prophets,—“ and in the Psalms,”—and the Proverbs of Solomon, and all the other books of the Bible,—“ concerning me.” Here, then, is our blessed Lord asserting that every part of the Old Testament scriptures is full of him. “ Moses,” he says, in one of the Gospels, “ wrote of me.” Now, where did Moses write of Christ? The name “ Jesus of Nazareth,” the name “ Christ,” the name even of “ Messiah,” does not occur in one of the five books of Moses. How, then, can it be said that Moses wrote of Christ? I answer, he wrote of him by character, not by name; in the same way as the epistles are addressed to us as characters, but not addressed to us as to so many names. The fact is, that the syllables and letters of Christ’s glorious name are strewed like stars on the firmament; and when the Great Sun of Righteousness has arisen with healing on his wings, they are lost sight of in the brightness of the perfect day. At the same time, it is but right to notice, that all that is in the Old Testament economy of shadow and of type is not yet fully revealed. I believe that we are at this moment but in the twilight of a grand, beautiful, and perfect day. It is truly said, “ We see through a glass darkly;” but “ then,” says the apostle, “ we shall see face to face, even as we are seen.” The fact is, the Sun of Righteousness has risen above the horizon, but his beams are yet horizontal; and you know, that when the sun shines horizontally, or is touching the edge of the horizon, he appears larger, but his beams are dim, in consequence of the dim and murky atmosphere. The Sun of Righteousness at this moment is just above

the horizon ; his beams are slanting, horizontal ; but when the millennium begins, his beams will no more be horizontal, but vertical ; and in that clearest light we shall see all things clearly ; we shall see him, not refracted and distorted by the atmosphere through which his light now shines, but we shall see him as he is, and we shall be like him.

Thus everything in the Old Testament economy is typical ; and, indeed, it is asserted to be so by Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews. He says, in the eighth chapter, at the beginning, “ Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum : We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens ; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices : wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For, if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law : who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle : for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.” And so, he alludes to it in the 9th chapter, in the twenty-first verse ; “ Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood ; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these ; but the heavenly things

themselves"—in themselves unseen, but of which this tabernacle was the pattern—"with better sacrifices"—that is, Christ's sacrifice—"than these."

Now, this tabernacle, it is plain, was not merely an arbitrary arrangement; but all Scripture leads us to suppose that it was a dark, dim outline of some more magnificent and glorious original. It is very important that we should always bear in mind, in looking at things that are recorded in Scripture, that the Holy Spirit uses what is in this world to illustrate heavenly things. Some seem to think that things seen are the original, and things unseen the copy; but the fact is, that the original of all that is below is in heaven; and every good that is on earth is a dim copy of the original in heaven. It seems to me plain, that this tabernacle, so minutely laid down, its specifications so express—descending to the very least, and embracing the very highest—is a copy upon earth—imperfect, dim, and dark, if you will—of some magnificent original that is in heaven, and that is to become actual and visible to us on this very earth. You will find that the whole book of the Apocalypse describes a future that is to be upon this world; I believe that this earth is to be heaven, and that this world will receive a glory, and a beauty, and a perfection that eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, and the heart of man hath not conceived. And I have often said to you what I think it is very important to remember,—that there is nothing sinful in a stone, nothing wicked in a beautiful flower; there is nothing impure in the bright stars that look down upon us, like the very eyes of Omniscience; there is nothing bad

in a magnificent landscape. I have often said, what I have often felt, that I could select spots, in which, if you could keep out the frosts of winter, and sickness, and death—in other words, if sin were extirpated—I could wish to be there for ever and ever. There is no cause, therefore, to suppose that heaven is to be, what many people dream, a sort of transcendental, aeriform, etheralized place, where we are to live in some state they know not what, and they know not how; but we are to be raised from the dead—these very bodies shall be raised—these very bodies, with resurrection beauty, and glory, and perfection; and I believe that on this earth, therefore, there will be enjoyed everlasting heaven. Why should the devil get this world? What right has he to it? It is too beautiful a world to be given over to him: it is too magnificent a thing to be abandoned, a wreck on the eternal sea. And why should it be abandoned? It only needs sin—the fever that racks and convulses—to be expunged; it only wants the consecrating tread of creation's Redeemer, and its deserts will rejoice, and its solitary places will blossom like the rose. And in everything in the world, one can see that there are hidden in this world possibilities that man, by art, is constantly developing: for instance, who would think that the roses that are now so beautiful, and that are to be seen at our horticultural shows, are all the results of man's art, bringing a very poor and paltry thing to that perfection? Why, all the different sorts of roses are the results from the wild hedge rose, a very worthless and paltry thing. And what is this? It is God giving man glimpses of the glorious secrets

that are below ; it is God telling man what the first paradise was, what possibilities of a better paradise there are in the earth ; and that, when sin is taken away, and Jesus has consecrated creation, then all its hidden and latent possibilities will burst forth ; and this art, at present the saddest, will become the most beautiful and glorious of all the orbs in the universe.

I notice, in the Book of Revelation, a constant allusion to a tabernacle of which this one in Exodus was the copy. For instance, in the twenty-first chapter we read, " I saw a new heaven and a new earth." He does not say, " I saw *another* heaven and *another* earth ;" but, " I saw a *new* heaven and a *new* earth ; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God"—a descent—"out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband"—evidently, the company of God's people, as I might show if I had time ;—"and I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying,"—what ?—"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them," as the *shechinah*, the bright glory that shone between the cherubim on the mercy-seat. This word is derived from a word which means "to dwell;" and, therefore, is the glory which dwelt between the cherubim. And he says, "And he will be the *shechinah* in the temple;" "he will be the glory;" or, "he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people; and God himself shall be with them, and be their God,"—not we taken to him, but he will come to us. And then how beautiful

is the next sentence! The poet Burns, who showed many exquisite traits of the human heart, though stained and marred by many sins, said he never could read what follows without weeping. It is exquisitely beautiful: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Such will be the results when, not the copy which was in the desert, built by Moses after a pattern, but the original itself shall be with man, and God himself shall dwell among them. In this chapter he describes this tabernacle, when he says, "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." And in the twenty-second verse there is a very fine statement made: "And I saw no temple, no *naos*, *i. e.* no chancel, therein." I never understood the full meaning of that till the other day, when looking at the words that are employed. In the tabernacle there was a distinction. There was what was called the outer place, into which the priests might enter; and there was the holy of holies, into which the high-priest alone might enter once a year. Now in some countries of Europe, they have a very foolish, and a very unscriptural, notion in practice; they have the nave, which is meant to be for the profane multitude; and they have beyond the rood screen, the altar-place, as it is absurdly called, into

which the priests alone can enter. And even in some professedly Protestant churches, I am told, that, if a lady were to approach the holy place, she would instantly be thrust out, as profaning the holy of holies, into which the priest alone can enter; than which anything more trifling or absurd, if not worse, in this nineteenth century, one can scarcely conceive. In the ancient tabernacle, there was the holy of holies, because all was typical; but we are told now, that there is no holy of holies—the veil of the temple was rent in twain, and the holy of holies was made conspicuous to all. That was an end of chancels; that was an end of choirs; there is no temple; that is, there is no holy of holies, there is no chancel—all is holy, and no part profane. This is the idea of a true Protestant Church; it is all choir, all chancel, there should be no nave at all; the whole sanctuary is the holy place; the nave is done away; the whole congregation constitute the chancel. And why? Because you are all priests. “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests.” And the Apostle, speaking to the laity, says: “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood.” And being all priests, we have all an equal right to the holiest place. We are not all pastors, not all bishops; but we are all equally priests; and a minister is not one whit more a priest than the humblest layman in the congregation; a pastor is your servant for Christ’s sake, and no more. Well, then, in that better tabernacle, the *naos*, or holy of holies, will be done away with, and “the tabernacle of God”—the grand original—shall

be with men. And then he says, "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon." Mark the allusion there to the candlestick with its seven branches; there was no window in the tabernacle, there was, naturally, darkness. The seven candles gave the only light that was there, as if to indicate the dim nature of that dispensation. But when the grand original itself comes from heaven, then there will be no need of a candle, no need even of the sun. Why? Because there will be a moral light still more glorious than any material light; and in this light all others shall become dim and go out; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb shall be the light thereof. And, as if to show more plainly that it is on earth, it is added: "And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it."

We thus see, throughout the whole Scripture, a constant allusion to some grand architectural original. And why should we not anticipate it? I do not see any reason why that beautiful description of the city, that lies "four-square," should not be realized on earth. It seems to me probable that Jerusalem—now trodden down by the Moslem, the Mahometan, and the monk, and the scene of quarrels—will yet be the metropolis of the world. And it is very striking to notice how all quarrels seem verging in that direction. The reason, at this present moment, why all Europe is showing itself to be—what one has often felt—a perfect volcano, has originated about something in Jerusalem. And the probability is—though far be it from me to prophesy, I am only to interpret prophecy,—the probability, I say, is that the last conflict, approaching

every day, will be in Palestine ; and when its din and its smoke have cleared away, there will be seen descending, like a bride adorned for the bridegroom, the true tabernacle, that has no need of the seven candlesticks, that has no chancel ; but in which God's priests shall assemble, and the very voices that once cried, "Crucify him, crucify him!" shall yet sing and shout, "Hosannah ! blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Such, then, are the scattered indications of the tabernacle which are recorded in the Word of God, and which show that it was a copy of a great original.

Let me now turn your attention to some of the furniture that was in the tabernacle, as being most instructive in its nature, and calculated to show that everything in God's Word has meaning, and instruction, and profit.

Now, the very first thing, though not given first in the catalogue of the Apostle, inside the tabernacle, and in the holy of holies, was the ark. Many have imagined that Noah's ship, which was called an ark, and this ark here described, have one common name. But in the original Hebrew the words are quite distinct ; the Hebrew for Noah's ark is *Theba*, and the Hebrew for this ark in the tabernacle is *Aaron* ; and they are quite distinct in meaning, as, indeed, in use. This ark seems to have been among the Jews the holiest symbol that they had. And it is a singular fact, that there is scarcely a nation in the world that has not a tradition of something of this kind. It is one of the most striking evidences of the truth of the Pentateuch, that all its great facts are dis-

torted indeed, but still exist at this present moment, among almost all the nations of the earth. For instance, the Egyptians, as you will find from the monuments that have been gathered from Egypt, carried in their processions a sarcophagus, or a sacred chest; the Greeks, as every school-boy will recollect, had their sacred Palladium; and the Romans, if they had not their ark, had their *pene-tralia*. Now, what is all this? Just the traditional remains of a grand truth, evidences that the writing of Moses is true; and proofs, too, how distorting a medium is tradition, when a great truth is set afloat upon the opinions and traditions of men.

This ark was made of wood, called in the Septuagint, "incorruptible wood;" it was of the hardest and most durable description, something of the nature of cedar. And the reason why it was incorruptible was probably in reference to its typical import; because the ark is constantly alluded to in the Apocalypse, and in the Epistles, as I shall show by-and-by, as the great type or symbol of our blessed Lord. For instance, the Apostle says, in Romans iii. 25, after describing that by deeds of law no flesh can be justified, and showing the righteousness by which we shall be justified—"Whom God"—"whom" refers to Christ—"whom God hath set forth to be a *mercy-seat*,"—rendered in our translation, "a propitiation." And again, in Revelation xi. 29, we read, "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament;"—now, that is identified in other parts with Christ himself. There is no doubt, therefore, that this ark was intended to be the type of the coming Messiah, and

was meant to teach that by shadow which we know in spirit and in truth.

And now, what was in this ark? There were placed in it, first of all, the two tables of the law. The first tables, you remember, were broken when Moses dropped them, and two other tables were prepared, and placed inside this ark; and there they were kept till they were lost at the captivity, after which the glory departed from Israel. What was the meaning of this, that the two tables of the law were placed inside the ark, over which was the mercy-seat, and the glory that shone between the cherubim, the symbol of Christ? Just this, that in the Gospel the law is not diluted, it is not passed away, it is not to be trodden under; it remains with all its exactions now as it did once; and before a single soul can get to heaven, it must have a perfect righteousness. It is just as true to-day as it was on Sinai,—as it was in Paradise,—that without a perfect righteousness, that is, perfect conformity in thought, word, and deed to God's holy law, there is no admission into heaven. Adam tried to perform a righteousness by personally obeying, and he failed in the grand experiment; we have not to perform a righteousness in order to be admitted to heaven by it, but it has been performed for us in Christ; so that we are admitted into heaven not by ourselves personally obeying the law, but by our trust in One who obeyed the law for us in our stead. This law remains in all its perfection now, just as it subsisted in the ark then; only its thunders are hushed, its lightnings are laid; it is no more an enemy, it is in Christ with us; and therefore there

is no condemnation from the law to them that are in Christ Jesus; for what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God hath done by sending Jesus in the likeness of sinful flesh, to be the propitiatory or the mercy-seat for us.

In the second place, we read that on the top of this ark, which was two cubits and a half in length—that is, assuming a cubit to be eighteen inches, it would be three feet nine inches, or somewhere under four feet—this ark had over it a “mercy-seat,” as it was called, or a lid, that was made of pure beaten gold, and that was sprinkled with blood—the idea of atonement—and hence it was called the “propitiatory,” or “mercy-seat.” Over it was the *shechinah*, or the visible presence of God himself. The lid, therefore, or the mercy-seat, with God’s glory over it, is, translated into New Testament language, God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. When the Jew needed mercy, his priest had to go for him to the mercy-seat; when the sinner needed pardon, his priest had to go for him to the mercy-seat. Now, the veil is rent; the high-priest is the propitiatory too, and every Christian, every believer, has access to God in Christ—the mercy-seat where he may obtain mercy to forgive him, and grace to help him in the time of need. How beautiful and encouraging is this thought, that every Christian now, without proxy, without representative, may go to God in Christ by prayer, and may seek, what he is certain to obtain, mercy from God, who is throned on the mercy-seat! It is now proper in God to pardon; I may expect God to give me, a sinner, mercy, just as much as I may expect that the waves of the ocean

shall roll, or that the sun shall shine. No Israelite ever asked his priest to intercede for him, and was refused; every sinner in broad Christendom, who is now in the presence of the mercy-seat—for the veil is rent, the holy place is now universal—may, by asking, obtain forgiveness, without money and without price. Is it not a very sad thought, that persons perish just because they will not humble themselves to ask salvation? It is one of the most simple, and yet, strange to say, the least believed, of the truths of the Gospel, that all heaven may be had for asking, that all glory is given gratis; and God has more glory and delight in giving, than ever we can feel in asking, or even in obtaining.

Let me notice another feature in the mercy-seat. God always gave answers to the people from the mercy-seat. Thus, we read in Numbers vii. 89, "And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy-seat, that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and the Lord spake unto Moses." Here, then, we have the mercy-seat, the place from which God speaks to us, where God hears us speak to him; it is the place where God still speaks to us. But how does he speak to us? God can speak to you, and to me, and to all at once, with infinitely more ease than I can speak to you. I can speak only to the outward ears; God speaks to the inner heart. If, then, I go to the mercy-seat—if I go to God in Christ as my Father,—and ask him for guidance, I am perfectly sure that he will give it. He will give it in his

providence, where something will appear which tells that you must not go this way; or some obstruction will start up, which will prevent you from doing what would have ruined you for ever. God still, in answer to your prayer, leads the blind in a way that they know not; or, at other times, if he do not restrain you by his providence, he will call up to memory a text that had become almost obliterated; and that text will be a lamp to your feet, and a light to your path; or his Holy Spirit, whom God gives to them that ask him in Christ's name, will speak—silently, but effectually—truly, though not audibly—to the innermost heart, and will direct and guide you in the way that will be for your good, and for God's everlasting glory.

Then notice, in the next place—though I can only briefly allude to it,—that over the mercy-seat there were the cherubim. These were two human forms, as is supposed, the tips of whose wings touched each other, while their faces looked down upon the mercy-seat; and between these cherubim, upon the golden lid, there shone an intense and brilliant light, or glory, which was the token of the presence of God.

The best sketches I have seen of this are by Bagster, in his very proper and very good engravings, representing the form of the tabernacle. It is very beautiful, and most carefully and accurately done. The cherubim are given there, and very well represented. Well, these cherubim were human forms, that looked down upon the mercy-seat; and the only allusion to them, that I know of, are Peter's words: "Into which

things"—speaking of the atonement—"the angels desire to look." Such passages as these, throughout the whole Bible, show that there is an intimate communion between saints in heaven and saints that are upon earth. That does not authorize the monstrous dogma, that you are to worship them; because angels minister to us, we are not, therefore, to offer adoration to them; that is quite a different thing. Still, the angels, as ministering spirits, are interested in the atonement; and I know no benevolence so pure and beautiful as what may be called unselfish benevolence,—taking a deep interest in what does good exclusively to others. And one can imagine nothing more beautiful than that angels regard Calvary as the most sublime and inexhaustible lesson-book that was ever written; and look, and wait to hear of a soul's conversion, and ever, as they hear of one sinner that repents, there is joy among the angels that are in heaven. And the cherubim, therefore, looking on the mercy-seat, may be meant to show the connexion that there is between heaven and earth, and the interest that angels feel in the transactions that are taking place in this present world.

Next, there was the glory that shone upon the lid, or the glory that shone between the cherubim. The shechinah, or glory, was the visible presence of God himself. And God in Christ is still where two or three are met together in his name. The propitiatory of Israel was local; our mercy-seat is here, is there, is everywhere. Every congregation has its own mercy-seat; and yet, all congregations have but one mercy-seat—that is, Christ; and,

therefore, when we pray, we are not to turn east, or west, or north, or south ; but we are to turn our hearts to Christ, the mercy-seat. What a beautiful religion is Protestant and spiritual Christianity ! How trifling, poor, and paltry, is that form of it that is neither Romanism nor Protestantism, recently imported from abroad, that spoils both Popery and Protestantism ! Our religion tells us of the blessed truth, that, wherever two or three believers meet in the name of Jesus, and ask general mercies, and praise him for general blessings, there is the mercy-seat. There are answers ; there is forgiveness ; there is the shechinah—the glory of God himself.

We read, in the next place, of this ark—on which I cannot comment further—that it wrought many and wonderful miracles. We read also, that this ark was regarded in Israel as its great and its chiefest glory. Some of the allusions to it are very touching. There is one in 1 Samuel iv., which I would particularly direct your attention to, as showing us how precious the ark of God was held to be. We read, in the tenth verse, “And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken;”—this ark of which we are speaking;—“and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain. And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. And when he came, lo, Eli ”—then a venerable priest—“sat upon

a seat by the wayside, watching." Now, what was his thought? "For his heart trembled"—not for the destiny of his nation, not for the fear of the victory of the Philistine; but the old man's heart was where an old man's heart should be—at the mercy-seat; "for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out. And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli. Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see. And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son? And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines;"—Eli says nothing to that—"and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people;"—he says nothing to that; he was a patriot, yet he does not seem to have been overwhelmed with sorrow when he heard that his country was conquered; he was a man, and yet he does not seem to have had his heart broken when he heard that there was a great slaughter among the people;—"and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead,"—he was a father, and yet he does not seem to have been much affected by that; and the messenger added, "and the ark of God is taken!" Now, mark what follows. "And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy; and he had judged Israel forty years." You

observe that he could bear the destruction of his country, and the slaughter of his countrymen, the death even of his two sons; but so did that man's heart cling to that which was the symbol of the glory and the presence of the God of Israel, that when the loss of that was mentioned to him, he fell, his heart burst, "his neck brake, and he died." And there is another instance, scarcely less touching than that, which we read of directly afterwards. "And his daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself, and travailed; for her pains came upon her. And about the time of her death, the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son,"—the greatest joy of an Israelite mother—"fear not; for thou hast born a son. But"—the first time that it had ever occurred in Israel—"she answered not, neither did she regard it." And then it is added: "She named the child I-chabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken." Can you have a more striking representation of the interest felt by the Israelites in the ark of God? And, my dear friends, do we thus love Christ? Does he hold this place in our hearts? Mothers in Israel, have you left father and mother, and sister and brother, and son and daughter, as no relations in comparison with him? They were in a dark dispensation,—we are in a bright one; they saw but a glimpse of the Redeemer's glory as he passed by; Jesus Christ has been set forth, preached before us. Do we trust him? Are

we seeking happiness through him? Are we altered by the fact, that he has suffered and died for us on the cross? Is religion anything to us but creed, and ceremony, and name, and habit; or is it life, power, light, guidance? And, lastly, let your hearts be more and more where the true tabernacle now is; that when this new tabernacle shall come down from heaven, adorned as a bride for the bridegroom—where no sod shall be broken for the dead, where no tears shall be shed for the living, where former things shall have passed away, and there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness—we may be for ever in that happy home that remains for the people of God.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MOSES TARRIES IN THE MOUNT. THE ISRAELITES SEEK AN IMAGE OF GOD. AARON'S PROPOSAL. THE GOLDEN CALF. IMAGES AND IDOLS. DRUNKENNESS AND PAGAN RITES. LANGUAGE. REPENTANCE. GOD'S FINGER. BROKEN TABLET. AARON'S APOLOGY. PUNISHMENT.

I THINK the chapter we have read records one of the most humiliating incidents in that chequered and instructive history which we have been perusing from Sabbath to Sabbath. Here is a people brought forth from the land of Egypt, their prison-house, amidst special mercies, before whom God's omnipotence had moved to open a pathway through the deep, to rain down bread from heaven to satisfy their wants, to guide and to comfort them in their way ; and yet this people, thus crowned with loving-kindnesses and with tender mercies, seized the very first opportunity of the absence and the apparent delay of their leader, and made a calf or a golden image, to represent the living and the true God, notwithstanding that they had heard the law proclaimed amidst the thunders and lightnings of Sinai, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image," and in which, as in all the other commandments of the Decalogue, they had expressed their belief, and to which they had declared their stedfast determination to adhere.

But let us see the greatness of the sin by the incidents that are recorded in the chapter.

We may notice, not only their ingratitude to God, but their signal ingratitude to Moses, his chosen minister, their kind, their forbearing, and their magnanimous leader. He had been forty days in the mount, as commanded by God, but these forty days were spent, not in his own work, but in contact with Deity, and specially for their benefit. The words that these insolent and ungrateful tribes use, are, "Up, make us gods which shall go before us ; for as for this Moses,"—the language of contempt—a sneer,—“the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him ;” he may be dead, if so, we do not much care ; but as we have lost him we must have some representation of Deity, in order to go before us. Great benefactors of mankind must not look for recompense on earth. It is your privilege, it is your commission to do the duty that devolves upon you in the providence of God, and to look for recognition beyond the grave ; for even the world’s greatest benefactors have not received the homage that they deserved ; we must not calculate on it ; and, therefore, whether we receive it or not, we must be guided by a sincere and deep sense of duty and of obligation, not by any prospect and hope of reward in this world. Never was there a leader so kind, so patient, so forbearing, so devoted, and yet these are the words he hears from this ungrateful people, “This Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.”

The next, and painful and rather a perplexing feature

in this narrative is that Aaron instantly complied with their wish. It has been supposed that Aaron here tried a plan that is, in fact, old and not new, and that man constantly has recourse to, yet with constant refutation of its value, and always attended with evil consequences—the plan of expediency. It is supposed that Aaron, when he heard them demand some image of the Invisible, in order to put them to the test, or to put them off, or in order to make an appeal to their avarice a reason for getting rid of the sin into which they were prepared to plunge, said to them, “Very well, then, take off all your golden earrings, and all your valuable jewels—all that is precious about your persons—take them off; and, if you are prepared to do that, then we will make an idol from them.” It has been supposed that he did not think they would do so—that he thought he could keep them from committing a great sin by proposing a way of accomplishing it that they would not submit to. But the result shows that it is most dangerous to tamper with what is clear duty. If the thing was right, he ought to have sanctioned it; but if the thing was wrong, he ought to have said that it was so; all ingenious expedients for trying to keep men in the way of duty which are not straightforward may seem very plausible, but they are never very prosperous.

We read, that he received the earrings from them after they had taken them off, which shows that their idolatry overcame their covetousness, and they were melted into one piece, which was cut or chased into the form of a calf. You naturally ask—Why this strange image, a calf. You will recollect that in Egypt the sacred bull, or the *Apis*, was the great

object of the adoration or worship of the Egyptians, as you will see upon many of the remains, and monuments, and inscriptions of that country, and it is thought that the Israelites carried with them a faint recollection of the idol—the sacred bull—which the Egyptians worshipped, and that they made the nearest approximation to it.

Thus early evil associations engender sad memories, and mingle with holier feelings. And you will observe that they did not profess to make a god, to be a substitute for Jehovah, but to make a god that should be the representative of Jehovah; for the language that they used was—"These be thy gods, O Israel!" The word *gods* conveys to the common reader a wrong impression. The Hebrew word for *God*, used almost always in the original, is *Elohim*, which is the plural number. For instance, in Genesis—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;" it is in the Hebrew, *Bara Elohim*, literally, "Gods created;" only the verb *bara* is the third person singular; and *Elohim* is the plural; being a nominative plural with the third person singular. And that strange, as you would call it, ungrammatical conjunction involves and teaches a great truth—plurality in the Godhead, and yet unity. In that they said, "These be thy gods, O Israel"—they meant "*this is thy god*, O Israel." And what confirms this interpretation, is the fact that Aaron himself "made proclamation, and said, To-morrow is a feast to the Lord"—to Jehovah; that is, the true God of Israel; and therefore they meant it to be, not a substitute for God, but evidently a visible representation of God. Now the question is, Was this

idolatry? There is no doubt of it. If you open the Epistle to the Corinthians, you will find the apostle writing there—"Neither be ye idolaters, as some of them;" and if you will read the judgment here pronounced, you will see that it was regarded as idolatry by God himself, and punished accordingly. This proves the fallacy of what some have stated—that it is quite right to have images of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, and even of God the Father. If we say, "Why do you worship images?" they answer, "We do not worship idols; these are not substituted for Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; they are merely representations of them." But the idolatry consists not only in substituting an image for the true God, but in representing the true God by images, which he himself has directly forbidden. And therefore to have images of God at all seems most unscriptural; to worship them, or rather, to take the gentlest form of it, to worship God through them, is idolatry, disguise it as men like.

It is then added, that "they rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play." Now, this shows that whilst they made this an image of God, the accompaniments of their worship were most objectionable. Here was just the heathen worship: they used to dance before their gods, to drink to excess, to indulge in all sorts of sensualism; and the Israelites did the same. And it is very remarkable that the Hebrew word for "rose up to play," means properly, "rude and wanton play;" and it is no less remarkable also that the Greek word *μεθειν*, "to be

drunk," is connected with a pagan sacred origin ; it comes from the words *μετα το θυειν*, which means, "after sacrificing to the gods;" showing how completely drunkenness was associated and identified with the worship of an idolatrous people.

The Lord said to Moses when this took place, "Go, get thee down ; for *thy* people." The language here is most suggestive ; God says, "They are not my people now ; they have forsaken me." The significance in these words is very remarkable. He says not, "*my* people have done it," but "Moses, *thy* people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves ; they have given up me, they have gone to their gods ; they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them ; they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, 'These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.' And the Lord said unto Moses, 'I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people ; now therefore let me alone ;' " do not pray to me ; as if prayer had such influence with God, that he bids Moses not to pray to him, lest there should be one instance in the Bible, of true prayer not answered ; "let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them." But then "Moses besought the Lord his God ;" and this shows his deep sympathy with the people who had treated him with such scorn ; his love for those who would not wait for his return to them—"and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people ?"—observe how Moses, with exquisite skill, changes the

idolatry? There is no doubt of it. If you open the Epistle to the Corinthians, you will find the apostle writing there—"Neither be ye idolaters, as some of them;" and if you will read the judgment here pronounced, you will see that it was regarded as idolatry by God himself, and punished accordingly. This proves the fallacy of what some have stated—that it is quite right to have images of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, and even of God the Father. If we say, "Why do you worship images?" they answer, "We do not worship idols; these are not substituted for Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; they are merely representations of them." But the idolatry consists not only in substituting an image for the true God, but in representing the true God by images, which he himself has directly forbidden. And therefore to have images of God at all seems most unscriptural; to worship them, or rather, to take the gentlest form of it, to worship God through them, is idolatry, disguise it as men like.

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pronoun, and does not say *my* people, but he says, they are *thy* people ; bad as they are, they are yet that, and therefore I beseech thee to have mercy upon them. And then Moses pleads God's glory. "Wherefore should the Egyptians speak;" as if to say, there is the result of going forth from our land ; there is all that God can do for you ; where are your promises, where are your prophecies, where are your miracles now? And then he says, "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants;" not, as has been said, that they intercede for us, but, remember thy promises made to Abraham, and Isaac, and Israel—"to whom thou swarest by thine own self"—remember, not their merits, but thy promises to them; remember, not their intercessions, but thy promises respecting their seed.

"And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people." Does God, then, change his mind? No; the word *repent* is applied to God just as many other passions are; we say, for instance, God is angry—God is grieved—thus applying human feelings and human passions to Deity. The fact is, there are not in our language words that can express what is peculiar to Deity. All our words are pictures; our language, with all its perfections and all its beauties, is after all but a series of approximate pictures which convey ideas by pictures, that the mind, the imagination, the ear, or the eye can comprehend. So, we cannot define God, because speech, the instrument by which we define God, is a human instrument, and would therefore have the imperfection of its origin. Then in one text it is said, "God is not a man that he should repent." It is plain,

therefore, that in the sense of changing his ultimate purpose, God does not repent; but in the sense of altering his procedure, in consequence of reasons that he foresaw and took into his estimate, that God is said to have repented. It does not mean change of God's purpose, but change of what seems to us the fair and the necessary course that he is about to pursue.

We then read that when Moses came down from the mount, and saw the sin of the people, he let fall the two tables of the testimony that were in his hand, and broke them. It is said of these tables that they "were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables." Some infidels have carped at this; and I must say it does seem to me as if it were not human finger, or human *stylus*, or pen, but God himself that engraved it; but why should it be thought impossible for God to engrave upon stone? Have we not discovered that the lightning can carry our messages—that the lightning let go at London can print at Dover, as has been more recently shewn—is it not found that the very rays of light themselves can engrave the most exquisite and intricate imagery; and should it be thought strange, then, that God should himself engrave upon stone the Ten Commandments? The fact is, the higher we rise in scientific knowledge, the more we see how true this Book is, how worthy of God to write it, how dutiful in man to believe, and bless him and rejoice in him. Well, when Moses heard the noise, and "saw the calf and the dancing," his feelings were so excited that he let fall the tables of stone, and broke them. This was the result of excitement, of indignation, of anger, or rather I should say, judging from

his character here, of grief. But when he came into the camp, we find that "he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it," as it is stated in a parallel passage, of which they were obliged to drink, as they had nothing else, in order to humble them.

Now, just notice the force of one great character amid a crowd. Here were millions of people; a population nearly approaching in number that of London, marching through the desert; they might have stoned Moses, they might have killed him; and yet such is the influence and force of a great, a vigorous, and a powerful mind, going forth with its own great will, and expressing that will with determination, that it made them all instantly give up. They gave up because there was the consciousness of guilt within them; he prevailed because it was an upright mind, reminding them again of the duties that they owed to their God, and which they had forgotten that day.

Aaron then came forward, and said, "Let not the anger of my Lord wax hot." Aaron seems to have been a very cold, collected, calculating person, and yet he was a very eloquent person. Moses was not eloquent. Aaron was; and he therefore says, "Let not the anger of my Lord wax hot." But what a miserable apology does he make! "Thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief"—then why did not Aaron try to set them upon what was not mischief? "For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the

man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And I said unto them"—what would you have expected to find that he said,—“Do it not, for God has said, Thou shalt not make any graven image?” but he did not say this—“I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me”—unexpectedly on my part—“then I cast it into the fire;” and then he says, with apparent innocence, but with real wickedness, “and there came out this calf,” as if he had never had the least hand in it; the old plagiarism from Adam and Eve—“The woman gave it me, and I did eat;” and when God came to the woman, she said, “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.” And so here, Aaron tries to vindicate his own innocence, and indirectly to cast the blame on the providential government of God, which permitted the gold to go into the furnace, and to come out unexpectedly in the shape of a calf!

Then it is said, “the people were naked;” that does not mean naked in the sense of being destitute of clothing, but it means naked in the inner and moral sense of the word, that they were before righteous, but that they now were sinful.

Then with respect to the command given to the sons of Levi, it was not Moses that ordered the three thousand to be slain; it was God that commanded it. Moses was the judge who pronounced the sentence, the sons of Levi were the executioners that carried the sentence into effect. It was not man's hasty and passionate judgment, but a solemn sentence pronounced by God's bidding and executed by God's command.

But how is it that amid so many that were

guilty three thousand only were slain? The answer is, there seem to have been three thousand who still remained outside the camp; for the language of Moses, in the 27th verse, is, "Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man"—it was evidently, the men that still remained outside the camp, and continued in their sin, that were slain; and those who began to see their sin in its true light were permitted to escape, but were plagued or punished with subordinate penalties and other chastisements.

We then read after this that Moses addressed the people, and said, "Ye have sinned a great sin:" that is, those who were still living, which shows that it was only the impenitent that were slain: "and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin." And then he says, "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin"—when there is very strong feeling, very often that feeling checks itself before it is uttered, if I may so speak—that is to say, it is too deep for utterance; and in the 32nd verse, we have a proof of it: "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—;" and he stops in the middle of the sentence; his emotions were too strong for utterance; it is an unfinished sentence, it occurs in all languages; "and if not," then he adds, "blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." Now, I have heard many persons say that Moses asked to be condemned to misery himself if God would only spare his people; but I am quite satisfied that the book that is alluded to here is a book that is elsewhere referred to in Scripture, and

denotes simply being numbered with the living that are upon earth, the book of the living ; and in several passages we find allusions to it : “ Let my name,” as if he had said, “ be numbered no more with the living upon earth ”—“ Let my lot be no more with the living upon earth.” See Psa. lxix. 29 ; Philip. iv. 3 ; Ezek. xiii. 9 ; Isa. iv. 3,—and all that Moses therefore asked here was, not that God should blot his name out of His own hidden book, which shall be produced at the great white Throne ; but that God would, if it pleased him, take away the life of Moses, if he would only spare the people that had been guilty of so great a sin—“ let me be no more numbered with the living creation if thou wilt only spare these ”—“ let my life be taken instead of the lives of the offenders that have been guilty before thee.” God said, “ Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out ”—punishment shall light upon the guilty head ; I cannot take thee as a substitute.

“ And the Lord plagued the people,” that is, made them feel their sin afterwards, whilst he did not destroy them.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MOSES' PRAYER. GOD'S GLORY. HEAVEN. THE GROWING
REVELATION OF IT. GLORY IS GOODNESS. HOW GOD IS
GLORIFIED.

IN the previous chapter, which we read last Lord's-day morning, we had that most distressing and humbling account of the apostasy of the children of Israel, even at the foot of the mount that burned with the glory of God, and with the accents of heaven still ringing in their ears. You will recollect, at the close of it, the intercession of Moses, who prayed, not that he might be blotted out of the Book of Life in heaven—which is a very common, but a very mistaken apprehension of the passage—but that his name might cease to be numbered with the living upon earth, if his death could only secure for the people that had so greatly sinned, the favour and the protection of God.

In this chapter we have Moses, the man of God, brought, if possible, still nearer to God: for the Lord spoke to him “face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.” The chapter opens with the beautiful announcement of God himself, that, notwithstanding all the sins of the past, his promises should not fail; “Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land

of Egypt, unto the land which I swear unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it." How wonderful is this! The sins of a nation do not always repel the protection of God. When man is unfaithful to his duty, though he forget God's precepts, yet God remembers his promises of grace, when man has ceased to be worthy of them at all. In other words, often in the experience of nations, as well as in the experience of individuals, "where sin hath abounded, there grace hath much more abounded." But God says to them, "I will send an Angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people." Now, I think this verse, and also verse 5, where God says, "Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee," are rather threatenings of what Israel deserved, than absolute promises or prophecies that God desired to fulfil. It seems to me as if he were trying them, to see whether they could appreciate his presence, and whether they would feel his absence and removal from them to be a great personal and national calamity; because we find that afterwards he returns to them in loving-kindness and in mercy, and pities them as a father pities his children.

One sometimes wonders that God should so condescend to reason with us. We often think ourselves a very important race, and our world a very magnificent orb; but in truth, if this little orb in which we live were expunged from the orbs of creation, it

would make no greater gap, relatively, than a grain of sand taken from the sea-shore would make a gap there. We are much less in any sense than we think ourselves; and if we are great, we are great only in the splendour of that greatness that pities us, and bears with us, and forgives us.

We read that Moses took the tabernacle, and carried and pitched it without the camp; and when he came out into the tabernacle, all the people rose up; and when he talked with the Lord, "all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door." It seems from all this, as if the terrible judgment on the three thousand in the previous chapter had been sanctified. Unsanctified judgments are the worst of all judgments; but judgments sanctified lose their character as penal visitations, and become paternal ministries. To the rest of the people, therefore, this judgment seems to have been sanctified; for we find them now exhibiting a devotional spirit, and showing an obedience to God that they did not manifest before.

We have a most interesting and beautiful account of Moses' communion with God—a communion that is here made visible—but that still exists between the soul and God as closely, as really, as truly, as it existed between God and Moses at the foot of Mount Horeb. The soul can still communicate with God. In that dispensation everything was done visibly; it was the infancy of our race, and God was guiding them with leading strings. But now the same closeness and communion is realized spiritually; the inner life being as real as the outer life, though not visible like it.

God then speaks to Moses as knowing him by name; and Moses, encouraged by God's condescending approach to him, begins instantly to pray for more than he had. The more a believer has, the more he asks. It is not the man—strange enough—that needs most that prays most; but it is the man that has got most that prays the more, seeks for more; because the more we have, the deeper we feel the wants that still remain to be supplied; the more precious we feel what we have, and live in the enjoyment of blessedness that we felt not before; like Moses, we make one grant the pretext for asking another, and one blessing a reason for seeking more. Therefore Moses says, "I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight,"—not merit,—“if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight,”—not that I have deserved it,—“and consider that this nation is thy people.” Then God gave him the promise of his presence:—“My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” And Moses felt the need of that presence so deeply, that he said that nothing could be a substitute for it. “If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.” Then the Lord said, “I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken; for thou hast found grace in my sight;” that is, What thou hast now asked of me, I will do.

Then Moses makes a very grand prayer, “I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.” What, had he not seen it in the burning mount, when the earth shook, and Israel trembled, and the mount was crowned with a coronal of the intensest glory? Had he not

seen God's glory when they marched through the channels of the deep dry-shod? Had he not seen it in the rock in the wilderness? Had he not seen it in the pillar of fire by night? What else could he want to see? My dear friends, it is the law of our being, that the more we know, not only the more we discover remains to be known, but the more we pray that we may know. I believe that heaven will consist in endless approximation to God; not only in character, not only in happiness, but also in knowledge. I believe that all we know at present, compared with what remains to be known, of mystery, and beauty, and greatness, in the world of creation, in the world of providence, is a mere drop in the bucket. Even the great Newton could say, when he was congratulated on his attainments, in some such words as these, "I am but like a child that has picked up a few beautiful shells upon the sea-shore, where the great unsounded ocean, that I know nothing of, stretches far away before me." And we shall find in heaven that it will be rising constantly to a new horizon; the verge of the horizon to-day becoming the centre of another to-morrow; and every day bringing new stores of light, as well as new accessions of joy. If there be prayer in heaven, where all is praise, that prayer will be, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory;" and every apocalypse of his glory will only make you long to see more; and the more you know, the more you desire still to know.

God instantly answered him; and how very beautifully does he answer him! "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." "And God said," I will do what? "I will make all my goodness pass before thee."

What a beautiful connection is that—that God's glory is seen in comparison as God's goodness is felt! I think that is one of the most striking thoughts in the whole Bible—that God's name is covered with its richest lustre, when God's goodness is felt most deeply by the greatest number of believing hearts. God was covered with glory, when he said, upon the circumference, if I might so call it, of the heavens, "Let there be light: and there was light;" but he appeared in yet richer glory when he stooped from the cross, amid his agony and blood-sweat, and said to the malefactor, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise;" because creation-glory was the manifestation of omnipotent power but redemption-glory was the exhibition of his greatest goodness; and where his goodness is felt most, there his glory is best seen. You will understand what is meant by giving glory to God. You remember the question I have often quoted—I think the grandest question that can possibly be asked—the first that we learn in the North in infancy, and the highest that a philosopher can study,—“What is the chief end of man?” “To glorify God.” That is the first thing; not to make money, not to get rich, to become great, but to glorify God. How do we do so? We cannot add anything to God's being; God, as an Infinite Being, is glorified just in proportion as he is seen. A man is glorified by something added to his rank, or to his wealth, or to his power. A creature must be added to in order to be glorified; but the Infinite is glorified just in proportion as he is seen as he is. The more you see of God, the more you glorify God; and the more i

seen God's glory when they marched through the channels of the deep dry-shod? Had he not seen it in the rock in the wilderness? Had he not seen it in the pillar of fire by night? What else could he want to see? My dear friends, it is the law of our being, that the more we know, not only the more we discover remains to be known, but the more we pray that we may know. I believe that heaven will consist in endless approximation to God; not only in character, not only in happiness, but also in knowledge. I believe that all we know at present, compared with what remains to be known, of mystery, and beauty, and greatness, in the world of creation, in the world of providence, is a mere drop in the bucket. Even the great Newton could say, when he was congratulated on his attainments, in some such words as these, "I am but like a child that has picked up a few beautiful shells upon the sea-shore, where the great unsounded ocean, that I know nothing of, stretches far away before me." And we shall find in heaven that it will be rising constantly to a new horizon; the verge of the horizon to-day becoming the centre of another to-morrow; and every day bringing new stores of light, as well as new accessions of joy. If there be prayer in heaven, where all is praise, that prayer will be, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory;" and every apocalypse of his glory will only make you long to see more; and the more you know, the more you desire still to know.

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your life you prove that you know what God is, the more God is glorified in you.

God said to Moses, You cannot bear the intense light. Now, it is evident that the glory of God is not only moral, but it seems, judging from the *Shechinah*, or the pillar of fire by night, and also from the description in the close of the Book of Revelation, that there is a visible glory about Deity. It is said at the close of the Book of Revelation, "There is no need of the sun or of the moon," implying that a greater lustre than either has superseded them. And what is that greater lustre? The "glory of God and of the Lamb;" so that it seems in the age that is to come, there will be a glory beside which the sun and the moon will grow pale; a glory so intense that the eye cannot now bear it; and Moses even, who spoke with God face to face, had to go into a cleft of the rock and be covered with God's hand; and the Apostle says that rock was Christ; and he could only catch there a glimpse of the intolerable splendour as it swept by.

May we be found standing on that Rock; may we be found in Christ, and so taste God's goodness, and see God's glory, and be thus happy!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MOSES PREPARES NEW STONES. GOD'S APOCALYPSE ON THE MOUNT. MOSES PRAYS. THE EXTERMINATION OF THE CANAANITES. THE EXPULSION OF ROMANISM. SABBATH IN HARVEST. FASTING. PROTESTANTISM AND POPERY.

IN a former chapter, you will recollect that it is written that God himself prepared the stones on which the Ten Commandments were to be inscribed ; and with his own Divine finger—that is, by his own special power—imprinted on those tables of stone the words of the Law that abideth for ever. Moses, you will recollect, broke the stones in his great indignation at the terrible apostasy which began to manifest itself among the children of Israel, aided most criminally aided, by Aaron the priest, who ought to have taught them to be steadfast and immoveable, and to keep to the truth, as that truth had been revealed. On this occasion you will see that God does not either make, or hew, or prepare the stones, but tells Moses to get ready the stones, and to prepare them, and to shape them after a model which he had seen on the mount, and which came originally from the plastic hand of Deity. Moses did so ; but it is said, the Lord wrote the law upon these tables of stone, though they differed in this

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respect in the second instance, that Moses, not God, hewed or shaped the stone. What was the reason of this it is difficult to say; perhaps it was a less visible memorial and residence of the glory of God with the children of Israel in consequence of their apostasy, and to remind them, throughout their nation's history, of that great and grievous sin, their idolatry at the bottom of the mount.

Moses, in obedience to the command of God, went up to Mount Sinai, and presented himself before God. He only could do so; he was a typical mediator, a representative, a figurative symbol of Jesus Christ, the only mediator, who has passed into the true holy place, and appears in the presence of God for us. But it is very beautiful to see that on that very mount which burned with fire, was shrouded with blackness, and from which the deep bass of the thunder rolled continually into the ears of quaking Israel—that on that very mount, whose antecedents had been so dark and so terrific, God revealed the most beautiful and comforting description of himself recorded, perhaps, in the whole Bible; to show that Israel was not to be under mere law; but while they saw and learned what the law was, they were also to have a foretaste of what the Gospel was also. We associate with Sinai everything that is terrific; the contact and the presence of a sovereign, a legislator, a judge. But we should not forget that on Sinai also was revealed that beautiful portrait of Deity: “The Lord God, merciful, and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin.” This,

again, corroborates what I have frequently remarked,—that God never says a word of terror that is not followed by two of comfort; that he never shows the dark cloud without seams in it letting forth a portion of his love, mercy, and beneficence; in short, that behind the cloud he hides a Father's face.

When he had made this revelation of himself to Moses, Moses bowed himself and worshipped, and said, “If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.” Now, what gave Moses confidence to utter such a petition as this? On Sinai, while the law was given, he uttered no such prayer. It is said that Moses then quaked, and trembled. But here, you observe, he addresses God in prayer, seeks pardon, and not only seeks pardon for the past, but prays for a favour, the richest and greatest that God could bestow—that he would make his people his very inheritance. Man's inheritance is that which he prizes; if it be an estate, if it be wealth, it is something that he takes to himself, and that he prizes highly because it is valuable. Now, Moses says to God, “Make this very people, this stiff-necked people—pardoning first their sin—that peculiar people, that chosen nation, that royal priesthood, that holy generation, thine own very inheritance which thou wilt prize for ever and ever. That which emboldened Moses thus to pray was the manifestation of God's character just previously—“The Lord God, merciful and gracious.” As if Moses had said, “Well, if this be the God I have to

deal with, I need not hesitate to ask of him anything that I want for me or mine." In other words, the revelation of God in all his excellency is not only the ground of prayer, but the highest possible encouragement to pray. When we pray, we do not pray to God the judge, or to God the legislator, but we begin our prayer as we should ever begin our creed, "Our Father which art in heaven." And why do we say "Father?" Because he has first revealed himself our Father in Christ, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; and seeing the revelation of himself that he has given us, we make that the basis of our asking the largest blessings that heart can conceive, or the tongue of prayer can give utterance to.

God next instructs Moses what he was to do among this people. He says first of all, that he would drive out before them all the heathen inhabitants of the land, "the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite;" and we read that they were driven out by battle, and famine, and slaughter, and by terrible punishments. The sceptic has often cavilled at this, and said, "How can we suppose that the God who revealed himself thus upon the mount would have exterminated whole races in the way he has done?" I answer, first:—God is revealed as a God of love, justice, truth; therefore, what he did, even if we could not see how, he did justly, truly, righteously, and well." And in the second place:—Are not individuals punished in society for their crimes? A criminal is seized by the police, condemned by the law, driven to a penal settlement, or

disposed of by the judge ; that is, a man sins against society, and society, with all its mercy, feels it a duty it owes to itself to remove the individual who has become guilty against the first laws, and rights, and duties of our social system.—When God drove out those nations, he acted as a judge. They were criminals, not hidden criminals, but proved criminals. You are told their sins had risen to heaven ; they indulged in the most abominable, the most depraved, and revolting practices ; and when God drove them out, it was not simply—as a sceptic would make you think—to make room for the Israelites, but it was punishing justly and righteously a guilty race, and giving their empty land to a people, not innocent, for they were a stiff-necked people, but a people that he had chosen to make by his grace what they should be—kings and priests unto God and unto his Christ. There was nothing unjust in this expulsion of these nations, in order to make room for the children of Israel. The expression “ God is a jealous God,” and the warning to Moses not to make any covenant with the Canaanites, but to destroy their altars, must suggest itself the reason for it. It seems strange that the Jews should be so prone to idolatrous practices ; yet I ought not to say so ; it is too common now. The Jews were meant to be a nation insulated from the rest of the earth, to be, as it were, a model people, or, if not a model people, a specimen of what human nature is when left to itself for a moment, and what grace can make out of the very worst of human nature by its transforming power. Now, their only safety was in their complete insulation ; the moment that

they had any intercourse with the surrounding nations, that moment they adopted their habits. Now, how do you account for this? Because we are a fallen race. If men were born, as the philosopher guessed, or thought he was born—his soul, his heart, his conscience, like a *tabula rasa*—that is, like a blank piece of paper with nothing on it, then whatever influence man is first exposed to would write itself deepest, and would be the great and the ruling one. But we know every man is born, not a blank, but blighted, stained, depraved, sinful; and being so, his sympathies are with what is evil, and against what is good. And if such be his nature, you can see that to keep him away the farthest from the evil is a necessary step to enable him to resist and overcome, as well as to obtain the influence of the good that is promised. And therefore God said, “Ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves.” That is the truest philosophy. If in this land, I think, they had effaced every lingering impression of former superstition, everything that was imported from Romanism, even if in itself indifferent at the Reformation, there would not have been again the unhappy attempt to construct Romanism in the midst of a truly and constitutionally Protestant Church. In the Scotch Church, they weeded out Romanism, root and branch, most thoroughly, so that it has never found a nook, or a crevice, or a corner to sprout in, from John o’Groats to the Tweed. It has been completely expunged from the Church, because neither grove nor altar, nor image, nor anything of the kind whatever has been retained.

I believe such was the feeling of Latimer, and Cranmer, and Ridley, but they were not able to do all that they wished. One is only thankful that they did so much, and earnestly do we pray that what they did may always predominate. But in all these things the great object is clear separation from what is evil. We know, as Knox himself said, roughly it may be, but truly, speaking not of the churches, but of the monasteries, that, when the nests are pulled down, the rooks will fly away.

We read, here, of several observances, among which is one very remarkable : " Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest : in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest ; " that is, You shall not violate the Sabbath-day because it is harvest. I have heard persons say, It has been six days very wet ; the corn is standing, and Sunday happens to be a bright sunny day ; and they say, We ought to go and cut down the corn on the Sabbath day. Here is a provision for this very possibility. God says, Even in harvest and earing time you shall still keep the Sabbath sacred to God. And I have noticed, although I admit my observation has been very limited, that that man who has cut down his corn on the Sunday in order to get it in well, did not succeed one whit better in the long run, than he that observed the Sabbath as holy, and waited for sunny week-days in order to do his week-day work. I admit that there are works of necessity and mercy that are proper to be done on the Sabbath-day ; and I can conceive the possibility that a time may come—an autumn may come—when, even upon the Sabbath-day, you should be

obliged to cut down the corn in consequence of unfavourable weather on the week-days ; but you should first be well satisfied that there is no prospect of sunshine during the six days that are to follow. Do not forget that God said—not as ceremony but morality—that in earing-time, and in harvest even, thou shalt rest, or sabbatize, or keep the Lord's day.

After reading of certain injunctions that God made, we find that Moses was forty days and forty nights on the mount—"he did neither eat bread, nor drink water." This was not the fast that they attempt at Rome, and which they do very badly, by simply abstaining from flesh, and eating vegetables, and even sometimes fish ; but it was an absolute fast ; it was total abstinence from food. So, when our Blessed Lord fasted in the desert, it was an absolute fast. But I cannot see that fasting is one of the imitable perfections of Christ ; we cannot follow his example by totally abstaining from food for forty days. There are some things in Jesus that are not for us to imitate : his walking on the waves of the sea ; his raising the dead ; his forgiving sins. Christ is our example in all his imitable perfections ; but there were traits in his character which are inimitable, and I cannot see that the forty-days' fast is at all imitable. And if to fast totally was the practice of Moses here, and if Jesus fasted totally during those days he was in the desert, it is quite certain that we cannot do it : if the experiment be made desperately, it must end fatally ; and if made imperfectly, I do not see the good to the conscience, or the sanctification to the heart, that can possibly follow from stinting and starving the flesh. It is, my

dear friends, so important to remember, that to mortify the flesh is Popery; to mortify the lusts of the flesh is Protestantism. To do penance, by walking upon pebbles twenty miles, is Romanism; to repent, is Protestantism. But the former is very easy to human nature,—the latter needs the Holy Spirit of God to inspire and teach it.

CHAPTER XXXIV. 5—7.

THE SAVING NAME.

SAVING NAME. MORAL GLORY. HOWARD AND BYRON. EACH
ATTRIBUTE. SOLUTION OF SINNERS' DIFFICULTIES.

“AND the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.”

The petition of Moses was most unselfish; as if he had said,—Lord, do not give me an illustrious name; do not make me to be remembered to all generations; let my name be eclipsed by the splendour and magnificence of thine. Lord, show me not my fame, my destiny, nor even my name in the Lamb's book of life; but show me thy glory, let me see it as it shines in the firmament when the heavens are telling, and all the stars are the syllables that

compose it; let me see that glory on earth; in the quiet beauty of morn, in the meridian strength of noon, in the matron dignity and soft shades of evening, let me see thy glory. Let me see it in providence, overruling its most complicated events, to beneficent and glorious issues. But above all, show me thy glory, where that glory is concentrated as in the brightest and most refulgent mirror, in Christ crucified, in whom alone I trust, and who is the brightness of thy glory, and the express image of thy person."

Now, when Moses asked this very natural grant, "Show me Thy glory," the answer that God gave to him was a very guarded one, if such criticism ought to be ventured at all; but just the answer we should have expected, or if not expected, that we can see to be so precious; "And God said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD." The request is, "Show me Thy glory;" the answer is, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee." How precious is the thought suggested by this—that when God is seen to be most good to his creatures, he is then seen to be most glorious in the universe; that the glory and the goodness of God are so connected together that where the one is most revealed, the other shines in its richest splendour. Not power in creating, not justice in punishing, but goodness in saving, sets forth most the glory of God. Creation is the mirror of his power; Sinai is the pedestal of his justice; but Calvary is the scene of his goodness, and therefore of his great glory. And we all know that great genius may make us wonder, great riches may make

us envy, great strength may startle us; but great goodness rises upon the soul with an influence like the sun in his shining light, making us love as well as admire, and reverence, and esteem. Lost as man is, goodness is still most impressive on the heart of the very worst. Even with all our depravity, who does not admire Howard, the philanthropist, vastly more than Byron, the poet? There may have been little genius in Howard, as the world calls genius, but there was a beneficence that went into the retreats of fever, into the lairs of vice, shut its eyes to monumental remains of ancient days, and opened his heart only to the cry of them that were appointed to die. And when one hears what he did, and what he dared under the inspiration of goodness, one is not awed, but charmed and delighted, with the character of Howard. But when we see, on the other hand, great genius—and one cannot but admire such a genius as that gifted nobleman had—we wonder at the greatness and the versatility of intellect; but when that intellect was used only to scathe, and to wither, and to blast, we look upon it in the same way as upon the sirocco in the desert, we are rather terrified at it, or retreat from it, or would rather wish we should not see it at all. But how complete is the contrast between goodness in a Howard, and mere power in a Byron! And is there one in this assembly that would not infinitely rather take the example of Howard as his model, than wish the power of Byron to be his possession? But this is in the human, and I quote it in the human only to show you more clearly the truth I am trying to teach; that not the manifestation of power, not the manifestation of

justice, but the manifestation of goodness, is the most impressive on the heart. God adds also, "I will proclaim the name of the Lord." Thus we see that God's goodness, God's glory, and God's name, are one and the same thing. How truly, then, has John summed up the whole of this beautiful revelation—"The Lord God, merciful and gracious," in one short sentence! "God is love," he might have said, "God is power," "God is justice," "God is truth," and it would have been all correct; but love, and mercy, and goodness, were what the old Puritans called the darling attributes of God. He singles out that attribute which strikes the human heart with the greatest force, and sanctifies what it strikes. "God is love;" this is his name, this is the epitome of "The Lord God, merciful and gracious." Now, every attribute in this name is just a syllable setting forth and composing together God's name. "The LORD," that is one syllable, "the LORD God" another; "merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth; forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; these syllables form the complete or perfect name of God. Let us look at them, and very briefly. First of all you notice it is in capital letters. In reading the Scriptures you must have observed that wherever the word is *Jehovah*, there the word LORD is in capital letters; but in another instance, where the word "Lord" is not the translation of *Jehovah*, you will find it is printed in small letters. In the 9th verse, "And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O *Jehovah*, let my Lord"—our translators have very properly put "Lord" in the second passage in small letters. In

the first, "LORD" is the rendering of Jehovah ; in the second it is of Adonai. In the New Testament the first is *κυριος*, and the second is *δεσποτης*, from which comes our word despotism, and which means "master," or "governor," or "ruler." The first syllable here is "the Lord," that is, *Jehovah* ; and the meaning of *Jehovah* is "the everlasting," the self-existing ; and this word to the Jews was so sacred, that in reading the Old Testament Scriptures, they do not mention it ; they substitute the other Hebrew word, *adonai*, in its stead. If a Jew found the word Jehovah on a slip of parchment torn out of one of his sacred books, that piece of parchment was consecrated for ever, as if the very name of God upon it made it sacred. It was called the incommunicable name of God. But in order to complete it, there is added, "The Lord—Jehovah—God." The word here is the translation of El, the same word which Jesus said upon the cross when he said "Eli, Eli, lama sabac-thani ?" that is, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" and the meaning of it is strength, omnipotent power. It is very important, that this declaration of so rich goodness should be prefaced by a declaration of Almighty power ; and that when you read, God is merciful, God is gracious, God is forgiving, you may know before you read, that he has power in himself to give all he offers, and apply every attribute that subsequently occurs in his name ; his greatness begins that we may not presume upon his goodness ; his goodness follows that we may not be awed or terrified by his greatness. The Lord God, it is added in the next place, is merciful. Now, what is mercy ? It is an attribute of God that

could not be existent, if I can make myself understood, unless there were sin in the world. Mercy is love through Christ in contact with sin. If you take a three-sided piece of glass, called a prism, and let the rays of the noonday sun pass through it, the pure white light will be refracted into what we commonly call seven colours, but what more scientifically are called three colours. Well, mercy is love refracted through Christ; it is love reaching us through Jesus, and in contact with our sins. But the idea of atonement is also in it plainly enough, from the fact, that "the mercy seat" is properly "the *atonement* seat;" atonement by "mercy" is the best way of conveying the original meaning. And therefore, whenever you read of God's mercy, hear the under-tone of sin in the creature, and of love in God reaching that sin, in order to forgive it through Christ Jesus.

It is next declared that God is gracious. Now, the meaning of grace is, that whatever God does, he does in sovereignty; that it has not to be purchased, that his boons cannot be paid for. The prayer of Wickliffe, the morning star of the Reformation, is a very beautiful one; "Lord, save me gratis;" or as it is in New Testament language, "Save me by grace." A Jewish commentator says, "We call that grace which we bestow on any man to whom we owe nothing." Now, when God is gracious, it is something that he bestows upon us when he owes to us nothing. No gift of God can be purchased—not intellect, not memory can be purchased; no grace of God can be purchased; neither sanctification nor peace. But how interesting, that while God's bless-

ings are in one sense unpurchaseable blessings, in another sense they are as cheap as a summer day, free as the atmosphere that we breathe; they may be had *gratis*. Because they are unpurchaseable, they are not therefore inaccessible; they are given freely by grace to those who ask them.

The next syllable of this beautiful name is "long-suffering." I have often thought this is one of the most wonderful attributes of God. Just think that if this earth on which we live were expunged, if God were to-morrow, by his Almighty fiat, to quench this little spark in the universe that we call the world, by the breath of his nostrils, or the bidding of his word, it would not be one whit more missed, than a child would be missed from the three millions that compose London; than a grain of sand would be missed upon the ever-sounding sea-shore, and God would not thereby part with one atom of his happiness; he might fill its place with a world ten times more beautiful, with people ten times more holy, happy, obedient, and loyal. And yet, while he could do all this, oh! wondrous feature in His blessed character, he has borne six thousand years nearly with this world, rebellious, resistant, disloyal, sinful. But let us individualize God's long-suffering; I take an individual; every beat of his heart is a rebound to God's touch; every expiration and inspiration of his lungs is the immediate power of God. We call it nature, because we are accustomed to it; but it is as much God as raising the dead; a living man is a greater miracle, that is, a greater manifestation of God's power than a dead man raised out of the grave; only we are so accus-

tomed to it, that we do not see it to be so. I take this individual, living not only without God, but in opposition to God; grieving God, and breaking his holy law, and yet God bears with him, is long-suffering. What a wonder that it is so! God gains nothing by it; he would lose nothing by his death. Why is He so long-suffering? We cannot explain it; only let us not, from fear of destruction—for that is a low and vulgar emotion—but let us, out of gratitude to him, out of love to him who has so long borne with us, cease to do evil, and learn to do well. Let us close with the offers of his word, let us trust in his name, and serve him in righteousness and holiness all the days of our life. This attribute is well expressed by the Psalmist when he says, “He hath not dealt with us after our sins.” How true is this! And then he adds that very beautiful verse, I think so touching—it is the highest poetry—“As a father pitieth his children, so doth the Lord pity them that fear him.” And it is added, in no less exquisitely beautiful language, “For he knoweth our frame;” he knows what a frail thing it is, and that our days are as grass, and as the flower of the grass. He is long-suffering. Only do not forget that his long-suffering has limits, though we have not yet seen them; those limits will be for certain a judgment-seat,—they may be sooner!

It is added next, “He is abundant in goodness.” What an attribute is this! “Where sin hath abounded, grace hath much more abounded.” He is not a god that has mercy and goodness as a cistern holds its contents, that may be soon emptied; but as a fountain wells forth its refreshing water,

inexhaustible, so he is abundant in goodness and truth.

And he “keeps mercy for thousands;” not thousands of men, but thousands of generations. He knows that they will sin, but, how remarkable ! he has laid up a store of mercy in heaven, just to be drawn upon by them that sin against him. He keeps mercy for a thousand generations.

And then comes the climax,—“forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.” All sorts of sin—iniquity, transgression, and sin; sins before conversion, and sins after; sins of youth, and sins of old age; sins of thought, and sins of word, and sins of deed, “forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.” Now, my dear friends, he that at a dying hour can realize that Name in his heart never will be lost. It is the secret of pardon, the source of peace, the well-spring of eternal joy.

But there are added two clauses that need to be explained. “He will by no means clear the guilty.” This looks like a contradiction, but it really is not so. He will not clear the guilty—that is, at the judgment-seat, guilt will not, in a single instance, go unpunished: if the guilt has not been visited and exhausted on the Substitute, then it will be visited and exhausted on the sinner. It will be seen to the whole universe that God’s mercy and love are perfectly compatible with his punishing sin, his doing justly, his being a holy God. He will not clear the guilty; where guilt is found, just as sure as the conductor brings down the lightning from the skies to the earth, so sure will that guilt bring down retri-

bution on him on whose head it rests, at the judgment-seat of Christ.

There follows another clause, "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children." If this be applied literally to parents and children, then, in that sense, it is not a question of theology, it is matter of fact. For instance, in this world it takes place physically; a parent spends his money, destroys his property, injures his health. What is the result? The children suffer the consequences of it. Now, if that be fact before your eyes, why complain, not of the creation of that fact, but of the simple declaration of that fact? In the next place, if a parent, a nobleman for instance, is disloyal, and loses his coronet, his children, as we know from 1745 in Scotland, become commoners ever afterwards. We see it as a matter of fact, that when parents sin, children do suffer. But some persons have attached to this the idea that children will be punished hereafter for the sins of their parents. This is not true; it is not said; but the very reverse is said; in the book of Ezekiel we read, "What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes,"—that is, have committed sin,— "and the children's teeth," inheriting the results, "are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die;" that is, through everlasting ages, each one shall personally stand or fall by what he is personally by nature, or

what he has been made personally by grace ; and it is not true that there is one lost child in ruin that will be able to say, "I am here, not by my own criminality, but for the evil that my fathers have done." He adds, "to the third and fourth generation" —not of them that love me, but of them that hate me. He visits the sins of the fathers that hated him in past generations upon the third and fourth generations of them that still hate ; for it is they that do as their fathers did that will thus be visited morally for their fathers' offences. But all that I have said assumes that it means parents and children. Now, I do not think that it really does mean this ; I believe it relates to rulers, governors, kings, and subjects. Fathers is a common expression in the Old Testament for rulers and governors. I do not now give instances. Cruden's Concordance will show you that it is so. If our House of Lords and House of Commons and our ministry go to war with Russia, justly or unjustly, what will be the result ? That our children will have to pay the expense of it. Justly, we believe, and because it was right, our fathers went to war with France. What is the result ? That our taxes at this moment are the result of our battles ; and we, the children, have to pay, and it is very proper that we should, for the victories gained by the heroism and the chivalry of our forefathers. You see, then, that if anything occurs in the conduct of rulers, if they cause war, or if they do anything that is positively wrong, or if they expend the national revenue, or exhaust the treasury, or squander the money that belongs to the nation, we find it is a matter of fact that ourselves, their suc-

cessors, and our children, must suffer for it; and therefore we have an interest that our rulers in Parliament should be in the right way, not merely on our own account, but because of our children's, and our children's children. And therefore, well does the Apostle say, "I will therefore that prayers be offered for all that are in authority,"—for rulers, and for kings, and for magistrates; not, "I will that we rebel," not, "I will that we abuse them;" but "I will that we pray for them." And you may depend upon it, earnest prayer at the throne of grace for our representatives in Parliament will do them more good than twenty articles attacking them in the newspapers. Let us pray, therefore, for our rulers that God would guide them to all that is right and good; and then we will not fear for the ultimate results.

Having thus explained each syllable in this glorious Name, let me notice, that in this Name there is a reply to every objection that an anxious inquirer—that a poor, sinful, anxious inquirer can possibly entertain. If any one in this assembly say, "I have no Christianity at all; I do not believe I have the least particle of the grace of God in my heart," well, suppose it to be so; his Name is Jehovah, and what is the meaning of that? It can create something out of nothing. So it follows from this that you are not beyond God's reach. But do you say, "It is worse than that; I am not only without grace, but I am loaded with transgressions, there "is a law in my members stronger than the law of my spirit?" Well, God's Name is "the Lord God"—the Almighty God; and if your heart be of stone, he can turn it into flesh. But perhaps you add, "But I am a sinner:

and how can I, a sinful creature, draw near to a holy God?" The next syllable of his Name is "merciful;" and I showed you that mercy is love in contact with sin. "But," you say, "I have nothing to give him for it; and if he be merciful, if he be mighty, if he be the Creator of something out of nothing, what can I give him for it?" The answer is, his gifts are unpurchaseable; he is "gracious;" he saves you, as he saved John Wickliffe at the Reformation, gratis. "But," you say, "I have sinned so long, that my hairs are grown grey in the service of Satan, and the world, and sin; and I fear that by this time God has cast me off." You have yet another syllable of his Name added—he is "long-suffering." "But," you say, "I fear that I have drawn upon his goodness so often, and so much, and sinned and drawn upon it again and again, that I fear it is all exhausted." Do not be afraid of that—he is "abundant in goodness and truth." "But the world," you add, "has lasted so long—now nearly six thousand years, and so many have drunk at this fountain, that I fear it has dried up." You need not be afraid of that: "he keeps mercy," not for one generation, but "for thousands" of generations. "But," you add, "I have been guilty of all sorts of sin—sins against law, sins against love, sins of thought, sins of word, and sins of deed." Well, he forgives all sorts of sin; "iniquity,"—that is one sort; "transgression,"—that is another sort; and "sin,"—that is a third sort. But if you should add still, "Is it possible that such a God can be? and if this be so clear, then will not men sin, and presume upon his goodness?" No; "he will not clear the guilty." The

sin must be put away—the love of it, the condemnation of it, the pollution of it—the sin must be put away, or you will suffer for it. No man need sink into that most unchristian state—despair—who hears these sweet sounds, and on whose hearts there is impressed the Name of the Lord. It is, if there be any difference, more wicked to despair, than it is to presume; neither is right, but despair is infinitely the worst: the devils do not presume, but they do despair.

Having thus seen the Name, let me explain to you, in the next place, where you can behold it. Moses was told by God to go into a clift of the rock when the Lord made his glory to pass before him; and God says, even while he went into the rock, “I will cover thee with my hand, while I pass by; and thou shalt see only,”—it might have been translated—“the skirts of my glory;” the mere parting wing, as it were, of the vision as it swept past. Now what does this show? That there would be something in the full flash of God’s glory that would be altogether intolerable to man in his present state. We see more of it than Moses saw. I believe that the glory of God is the original archetype of the light that covers our world. Things in this world are the shadows of things in the heavens; and I think it is a poet—or Plato—I forget which, that made this sublime remark,—The light of noonday is the shadow of God. What a magnificent thought! and so magnificent because so true—the meridian light is the shadow of God. The glory of God is something real.

The New Jerusalem, it is said, had no need of the

light of the sun nor of the moon. Why—what was the substitute? “The glory of God and of the Lamb was the light thereof,” showing that this moral glory has a splendour that will light up the universe till sun and moon become as useless as a distant star of the sixth magnitude at present. And I believe that one of the enjoyments in heaven will be seeing God in the way that we have never seen him before. If God had revealed all his glory—if he had not put the shadow of his hand upon Moses, if he had not revealed merely his skirts, as it were, as he passed by—Moses would have been overwhelmed. And this explains to you what is often said in Scripture, “No man can see God and live,”—not because God would destroy the man, but because the glory would be so intense that it would overwhelm him. Moral grandeur may be overpowering, and we learn in history that there have been cases where mental emotion has struck dead the physical economy. In the time of the South Sea speculation, some thought they were so sure of making a fortune, that persons are recorded to have died from joy in consequence of the success they supposed to be theirs. At the restoration of Charles the Second, several of the nobles were so delighted at the restoration of their rank, their dignity, and their estates, that it was too much for them, and they died soon afterwards from the shock they had received. Pope Leo the Tenth died beneath the excitement of joy at a battle which his troops had gained. A celebrated American astronomer was watching the transit of Venus over the sun’s disk; he believed that that transit would take place at a specified moment; and when he saw the

shadow of the planet appear on the disk of the sun, such was his excitement or gratification, that he fainted away from excess of joy. Sir Isaac Newton was so overcome by the sense of the magnitude of his discoveries, or of the extent of what he saw in consequence of the great principle he had laid down, that from excess of feeling he was unable to carry out his own grand calculations, and others had to do it for him. Now, if excess of knowledge, of joy, or prosperity, have these powerful effects upon the human frame, we can conceive that too grand an apocalypse of God would be unbearable now; just as the eyeball would be blinded by excess of light. But you can conceive what a splendour and majesty we shall behold when we see God, not through a glass darkly,—the smoked glass or lens through which we look at great brightness,—but we shall see him face to face. And what a change will have passed upon us when we can bear to look upon Deity and not shrink! The Apostle Paul said he was raised to the third heaven, and he saw sights that he could not tell, that he could not speak of. And in a beautiful poem, where it speaks of two supposed to be admitted to heaven, these beautiful lines occur,—

“But these were crushed with joy;
Return, they said, we cannot this sustain.”

There was too much of the glory visible for human nature to sustain.

When this vision passed before Moses, not only was the shadow of God's hand laid upon him, but we read that he was also placed in a crevice of

the rock. What that rock was, we are told very plainly and beautifully by the Apostle,—that rock was Christ. In creation, in its brightest Alpine peaks, in its spring, its summer, its autumn, and its winter, we can only see partial and imperfect glimpses of the presence of God, and those which we see are so contradictory that we do not know whether to conclude he is our Father or our Foe. In providence, again, there are many perplexing things : we see vice prosper, virtue suffer ; we see goodness sad, cast down, depressed ; we see the bad man happy. Now, if God is, and acts in the world, how is this ? why is this ? We see sorrow, suffering, sick-beds, death-beds, graves—is God angry ? If he be angry, will he condemn us all—or if he save any, will he save all ? Thus in creation and in providence we can see enough of God to believe in God, but we cannot see enough of God to let us know what he will be to us his creatures. Again, if you look at God on Sinai, all there—the blackness, the thick darkness, the thunders and the lightnings—indicate wrath. In creation, in providence, God is uncertainty to us ; on Sinai God is hostility. In the rock, in the clift of the rock, in Christ Jesus, we see not only his glory pass by, but like an *auréole* surround the head of our blessed Lord, in which mercy and truth have met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other. When Jesus walked upon the waves, he trod out glory in every step ; when he raised the dead, his glory passed by ; when he hung upon the cross his glory burst forth. Then it passed with the splendour, but with the evanescence of a meteor ; now it is fixed in heaven—the bright and

the morning star,—visible all to that have anointed eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hearts to feel. Thus we not only see what Moses saw, but a great deal more. He saw this Name pass by under the shadow of God's hand, in the cliffs of the rock ; but we see in the New Testament revealed in Christ all that is possible of the glory of God—we could not bear more of it. The veil is taken away from our face which was upon the face of Moses, and twilight is now the noonday.

Do we, let me ask, trust in this Name? “They that know thee,” says the Psalmist, “will put their trust in thee.” It is revealed not for our admiration, not to satisfy our curiosity, but for our apprehension by faith, and our trust in and through Christ Jesus our Lord. How thankful should we be that we have not to discover it by laborious search, but that it is revealed to us from heaven. The Bible is not a discovery ! that man strikes out ; but a revelation that God sends down. We could not go up to him ; he has in his mercy come down to us.

May we glory in that Name ; may we rejoice to spread it ; may it be our rock, our refuge, and our hope, for Christ's sake ! Amen.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE TABERNACLE. THE SABBATH. VOLUNTARY OFFERINGS.
ALMS IN KIND AND IN CURRENCY. SELF-LOVE AND SELFISH-
NESS. ZEAL AND DEVOTEDNESS.

THE words I have read, constitute strictly the preface to the development and completion of that edifice, which was to last whilst the Israelites were in the desert, and only to be superseded by the yet more magnificent and splendid temple of Solomon. You will find at the beginning of this chapter, that the Sabbath is still to be observed as a day of rest from any work, done even in the sacred service of the Tabernacle itself. God seemed to regard this day as so obligatory upon each and all, and so peculiarly consecrated for man's highest good, and for God's present glory, that he would not allow the Sabbath to be used even in the building of that very house which was to be for his worship, and the assembling together of his worshippers. It was to be still a holy day ; a day specially set apart for rest. The penalty denounced is not a penalty that belongs to it now ; but it was peculiar to the circumstances in which they were placed ; because the least departure from the discipline and organization established by God himself in the

desert, would be, not simply the violation of a divine law—in itself bad enough—but far worse than that; it must be remembered that in a theocracy, where God was visibly and audibly their King and their Lord, the observance of the Sabbath was not merely in itself a grand moral obligation, but became binding as an act of allegiance from their peculiar relation to God; and, therefore, the violation of that day would be so overt an act of treason, and disloyalty, and rebellion, that the highest penalty in these circumstances—not stretching into ours—was attached to the violation of it. The expression in the third verse has been perverted by the Jews: “Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day.” They hold that this applied, at least in after ages, to private houses; but it seems to me that you must interpret the text—I can only appeal to you as reasonable men, and ask you, looking at the narrative, to judge—as connected with the subject that God is speaking of, and Moses recording. That subject is the building of a tabernacle, that required blacksmiths and forges, and weaving, and embroidering, and melting of metals, and a great amount of employment of that kind. Now, God says: “Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations”—that is, your tents that are now pitched in the desert—“on the Sabbath day.” But a fire here evidently means, a fire for preparing metals, for building the Tabernacle; as he is speaking of the use of the Sabbath in connexion with the building of the Tabernacle; and the prohibition here not to kindle a fire in their habitations on that day, is, therefore, associated exclusively with the building of

which God is speaking ; but is not an obligation not to kindle a fire to prepare their ordinary food on the Sabbath day, when they were settled permanently.

We find Moses speaking from God, and commanding the children of Israel in the name of God to bring their offerings. But though it was a command, they were to bring them with a willing heart. Moses tells them, You are to give because it is a duty ; but yet you are to give, not under constraint,—to purchase something, or to atone for anything,—but you are to do it with a willing heart, that is, spontaneously ; not for show, or ostentation, or by constraint. I think that when we make collections in Christian congregations, we ought to do it in the way that will lead those that give, to give most spontaneously. Any attempt to make people give, in order that they may feel ashamed by not giving, seems to me preposterous, antichristian, and absurd. Better have the little that comes from the willing heart, than the large sums which are given by constraint, or from any earthly or worldly motive. In this chapter you will see how strongly this is insisted upon ; they that gave, gave, it is said, with willing hearts—every one whom his spirit made willing brought an offering to the Lord—the children of Israel brought a willing offering to the Lord, every man and woman. And therefore, if in these circumstances the ecclesiastical rulers of Israel did not dare to prescribe, or bid the people give, on any other ground than that of a willing heart ; so, I think, now, were the rulers of any church, whether Protestant, or Romish, or Jewish, to inspect every man's income, to take an inventory of every man's property, to in

stitute a sort of inquisition into every man's circumstances, and to say: "You ought to give this sum *per annum* to support the church, and you ought to give that sum *per annum* to support missions;" it would seem to me most unscriptural and most unchristian, and must be, in its effects, disastrous to moral and spiritual character. If it is to be what is called a voluntary system, let it be so in all its freedom and in all its influence; and you may depend upon it, wherever a heart is touched by grace, there the hand will be extended in beneficence, and men will give largely, because God has providentially given liberally and largely to them.

In the second place, every man gave willingly, not what he had not, but that which he had. Some had gold, and they gave that; some had silver, and they gave that; some had brass, and they gave that; some had linen, and they gave that; some skins of rams, some badgers' skins, some goats', and some could carve wood, and cut stones, and do all manner of cunning work, and they gave that. Now, what is implied by all this? There was no money in the desert; there was no representative currency. If there had been a currency established amid these nomade tribes of Israel, every man would have given his shilling, or his sixpence, or his sovereign, or whatever he chose to give; but as they had no money, they gave that which money represents; each gave the substance that he had, and could give, not being expected to give that which he could not. Now, in so far, in modern times it is changed. When you give to a collection for the building of a church, or for the extension of the Gospel, you do not give badgers' hair,

and goats' hair, and rams' skins, and bracelets, and earrings; but you give that which your cutting of stones, your dyeing of skins, or weaving of fine linen, has enabled you to earn; and which is the representative, in your position, of your genius, your labour, your skill, your patience, your time, your capital. Hence it is still the same thing in substance, but different in form: ours the more convenient, theirs in the desert the more primitive and natural.

In the next place, you will notice that the women, as well as the men, gave. This was truly important and becoming. Woman has a deeper interest in the spread of real religion in this world than even man: it is to it that she owes all that she is; it is in its reflected splendour that she shines so beautiful; it is from Christianity that she has borrowed the position she now holds; and therefore, when she gives to the spread and maintenance of true religion, she really gives to the assertion of her own just position, and to the maintenance of her dignity and her privileges amid mankind. I do not say that this ought to be the only motive; but there is no doubt that it should come in. It is very absurd of people to say, that we ought to give without any thought of self; I think we ought to give on every ground that is just and good, and in itself holy and expedient. Selfishness is sinful, but self-love is not sin; on the contrary, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as *thyself*," is a command to love thyself as thy neighbour; and therefore self-love is not sinful; in its place it is most subservient to good. But when that self-love degenerates into selfishness, just as when anger de-

generates into revenge, then that which was in itself most holy, and beautiful, and right, becomes degraded and depraved. We may, therefore, give to the maintenance of religion, because it benefits our country, because it adds to our greatness, because it is a benefit and a blessing indirectly to ourselves: and when we do so from this motive, as a subordinate one, we do not do that which is wrong in the sight of God, or reprobated in any part of the Bible.

And in the last place, you will notice the intense zeal with which they gave. It seems to remind one that they themselves felt how sinfully they had acted in the matter of the golden calf, when they made an idol, and worshipped it instead of God; and that they were anxious—if I may so speak—to compensate for the past by greater devotedness for the future. They redeemed the past by these efforts; reminding one, in the next chapter of Exodus, of what the apostle says, while he seems to have had this history in his mind, as he wrote:—"Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." They seem, as it were, to have repented of the past, and become rich in good works more and more. Their liberality was so great, that Moses had positively to restrict them, and assign limits to the exercise of it; some-

thing in the same way in which the apostle speaks in the same Epistle to the Corinthians—"How that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves:" showing us how much grace can do, where it makes the heart willing, in making the hand open, and in seizing all the means of glorifying God, and doing good, not by impulse, but with all the elements of progress and of permanence.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

GOD'S PRESCRIPTIONS CARRIED OUT. REASONS FOR MINUTE SPECIFICATIONS. LIBERALITY OF THE PEOPLE. RESTRAINT NECESSARY. GOD'S WISDOM GIVEN TO BUILDERS.

THE chapter seems at first sight an extremely dry and uninteresting detail of mechanical arrangements requisite in the construction of the Tabernacle, and unsuggestive in their mere catalogue of any important personal and practical lesson. But yet no doubt the object that God had in this, and indeed in the chapters that follow onward to the fortieth, was in all probability to show, that the minute specifications that he gave to Moses in the previous chapters respecting the erection of the Tabernacle, were not carried out loosely, or slovenly, or in the rough, but in the minutest jots and particulars, according to all the pattern that was showed him on the mount. It is, therefore, not altogether uninteresting that we should see in our perusal of the chapter, that whatever God enjoined, and however minute the instructions that he gave, all received their fulfilment. We have in some parts of the Bible a prophecy : then, in subsequent parts, we come to the fulfilment of that prophecy. We had, in the previous part of the Book of Exodus, a precept ; and we have, in the chapter we have now read, the fulfilment of that precept. It is

just as important that we should see God's precepts carried out into practical development, as that we should see God's prophecies unfolding themselves in successive and continuous fulfilment; teaching us, that whatever God enjoins, and whatever God predicts will be,—that heaven and earth may pass away, but one jot or one tittle shall not fall from his word till all be fulfilled. I think I stated to you on a former occasion, that there was a reason for all these minute specifications, arising from the fact, that this Tabernacle was not a mere tent in the desert for a place of worship, but was prefigurative of a house not made with hands, finding its full accomplishment and illustration in the close of the Apocalypse, where we read of God's temple being with men, and the glory of God and of the Lamb filling it. I cannot believe that this catalogue of minute details in the mechanical construction of a tabernacle in the desert was for no purpose. We are not to wring out meaning from each of these details as if it were a type; but no doubt it had an end and an object, which is to be seen in the future. And if in that respect we cannot see what its ultimate end and object may be, we are satisfied of this,—these half-savages, as many of the Jews at that moment were;—a stiff-necked and a rebellious, an uncultivated and an illiterate people, needed such. No wonder they were sunk—they had been slaves for forty years; and generally man sinks down to the condition under which he is pressed and borne down; and they were incapable of themselves, without divine instruction, of carrying out God's plan, or doing according to his will, except from line upon line, and precept upon

precept. If they had been left to fill up a single niche after their own taste, they would have put an Egyptian idol in it; if they had been left to do one thing in the construction of this Tabernacle after their own taste, they would have copied something from Egypt. And all experience shows, that the thin edge of the wedge introduced in spiritual and moral things, does not stop there till the whole is rent asunder. Such is man's tendency to idolatry—such is man's tendency to what is sensuous in worship, I do not say, sensual—I say sensuous in worship; that is, to worship after the senses, that, leave him the least latitude, and he is sure, even in these more enlightened times, to turn that liberty into licentiousness. How much more need, then, had these nomade tribes—just escaped from the serfdom of Egypt—of very minute, very specific details, even to pins and bolts, and tenons and taches, in order to keep them from what in the end might have led them to forget God, who had brought them out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm!

Bezaleel and Aholiab had no sooner begun to work, and Moses had no sooner asked the people to furnish them with all the materials of work, than all the people vied one with the other in their contributions towards this Tabernacle; and a fact was presented there rarely presented in these more modern times—that the liberality of the people had to be restrained. The constant tendency, the constant practice now, is to excite the liberality of Christian people, by showing them reasons for it; but then, the rare and beautiful fact was exhibited of Moses being obliged to restrain the liberality of the

people, by telling them that they had given more than was amply sufficient, and asking them to contribute no more.

It needs God's inspiring wisdom to teach a man to build an earthly temple, just as it needs God's grace to make a builder of the true temple, or to fit a Christian for any of the duties and responsibilities of the Christian character. God inspired Bezaleel and Aholiab with understanding to work; he inspired Joshua with bravery and wisdom to fight; he inspired Moses with instruction from on high to lay down plans; he inspired evangelists to write, apostles to preach. Every grace and gift is from above, even from the Father and Fountain of all wisdom and of all light. The word "wise-hearted," applied to those that worked, corresponds more properly to another word now employed; we say, a "skilled labourer," meaning one who is not only a clever labourer, but one who knows the subject of the work, or trade, or handicraft, in which he is employed.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

REASONS OF RECORDS OF MINUTE WORKS. TABERNACLE FURNITURE. THE ARK. THE MERCY-SEAT. THE SHECHINAH. EARTH RELATED TO OTHER ORBS. CHURCH OF CHRIST NOT TIED FOR EVER TO A LAND. CANDLESTICK. CHRIST THE HIGH PRIEST IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES. SKILL OF ISRAELITES.

You will remember what I stated in the course of my reading the previous chapter—that the 36th to the 39th chapters of the book that we have so nearly gone over in successive lessons, contain the fulfilment of all that Moses was commanded in the previous chapters to do ; and in these last portions of the book we have the historical record that he did exactly as he was commissioned by God. The reason why so minute and elaborate details are given in these chapters seems to be to show to us that Moses carried out exactly, rigidly, and minutely, every order that he received ; not determining in his own mind, “ This is not important, and therefore I may omit it,”—and “ that is important, and therefore I must do it ;” but acting rigidly and strictly, according to the pattern that was showed him on the mount, and the prescriptions set forth by God. This chapter, like those that succeed it, records the fact that Moses did so.

I explained many of the institutions and contents of the tabernacle, which was typical of a greater and

a more glorious one, in our readings on previous chapters. In this one, it is recorded of Bezaleel and those who assisted him in the work, that they made first of all the ark, and the mercy-seat that was on it, and the cherubim that overshadowed it. Paul says, in his Epistle to the Romans, that Christ Jesus is our *propitiation*, as it is rendered in our translation ; it is in the original, "our mercy-seat." And were there not there this special allusion, there are other reasons for concluding that this ark, with its golden lid, and the glory, or the *shechinah*, or bright effulgence that rested upon it perpetually, was a type and a symbol, in its place and in its measure, of Christ Jesus, our only Atonement. In the ark, it says, were the tables of the Law, which represented the Law magnified and honoured in Christ Jesus. Over the ark, there was the golden lid, on which there rested that glory which was called the *shechinah*—to teach us that mercy, and truth, and righteousness, and peace—the true *shechinah*, the true glory of God—are illustrated, and brought together, and made real, in our salvation in Christ Jesus.

We read that over this mercy-seat were the cherubim, whose faces were toward each other, the tips of whose wings touched over the glory ; to denote the interest that the inhabitants of other worlds feel in the grand transactions that are being consummated in this ; that into these things, so wonderful, angels desire to gaze. And this is perhaps a faint hint or lesson of that great truth, that this orb of ours in which we live—physically so small, among the least of the great orbs of the universe—is morally the most important of them all ; that it is, in fact, the

lesson-book of God's great universe—the world at which other worlds look in order to learn what they cannot learn except in the Atonement—how just, how holy, how merciful, how loving, how glorious God is. Now these cherubim gazed upon this glory whilst their wings touched each other; as if to denote the perfect unity that exists among them.

We notice, in the next place, that this ark, with all its beauty and its glory, and its exhibition of great truths, was not a fixture—it had rings in it, and staves in it for removing. This teaches us that the Gospel is not given to any nation a perpetual fixture. The seven Churches of Asia were once the most illustrious of Christendom—now scarce a vestige of their glory remains. Other lands have had the Gospel just as we have it, but God in judgment removed it; and we have the ark in the midst of us now, but it depends upon us—how we are thankful for it, what use we make of it, how far we sacrifice to make known the treasures it contains—whether it shall remain in the midst of us or not. The candlestick is moveable, the ark had rings and staves in it, and was moveable also. The Gospel in a country is given not for misuse, not for abuse, but for daily, sanctifying, practical usefulness in the midst of us—if it fail to produce these, it takes its departure.

We have a description of the candlestick, which was formed also of gold, and consisted of seven branches. Now recollect, in what was called “the holy of holies” in the tabernacle—and there was the very same distinction in the temple that superseded the tabernacle—there was no window to

admit the light of heaven. The only light where the high priest went once a year was the light of the golden candlestick in the midst of it; and this golden candlestick was therefore given to be put into that place. We read that when Christ died, the vail of the temple was rent. Now that was, I think, one of the most significant facts in the Bible; for it taught us this—that now there is no distinction; the chancel end and the nave end are exactly the same; there is no rood screen to separate the clergy from the people, the priesthood from the laity. All true Christians are priests unto God; all have the same right of access to God; all can approach equally near to God in Christ Jesus; and the minister of the Gospel has ceased to be a priest, because a priest has nothing left to do; he is simply a teacher, a pastor, an evangelist, an overseer, a presbyter, or if there be any other equally expressive and Scriptural phrase.

Into this holy of holies, we are told, the high priest went once a year, and not without blood. We are told now that our great High Priest has entered into the true holy place, and we know that all the time he is there he ever liveth to make intercession for us. The lesson taught by that incident is a very beautiful one. The high priest first made atonement without, upon the brazen altar; secondly he went into the holy of holies, not without blood, with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel upon his breast-plate, making intercession for them. Thirdly, the people waited outside, judging by the sound of the bells upon his robe whether he was living or not, and accepted or not. And then the high priest,

having finished the intercession, came out of the most holy place, and pronounced the benediction upon the people, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee." See Numb. vi. 22—27. This exactly corresponds to our Lord. He made the sacrifice without; he hath finished transgression, made an end of sin; no more atonement is needed, no more can be, no more has been since. Secondly, he has gone now into the true holy place, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us. And thirdly, we the people are waiting outside, where the suffering once was, looking for the return of our great High Priest from the holy place not made with hands, to pronounce upon earth and upon all its people a blessing that will make its very deserts rejoice, and its most solitary places to blossom even as the rose. That is our position at the present moment, or as it is expressed in Scripture, looking for the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour.

In speaking of this I may notice that it has been doubted here, where it is said that "he made the candlestick of pure gold," whether that meant that this was a candlestick of gold, or whether it means that it was gilt. It has been thought by some that it meant gilding, and that gilding was an art well known to the Egyptians, and would naturally, therefore, be known to the Israelites. It has also been said by some, How could these nomadic tribes just escaped from the brick-kilns of Egypt—how could they, being wanderers in the desert, find all this gold and silver? The answer to that is that they carried with them immense treasures out of Egypt; in the language of the passage that describes it, it is

said that "they *spoiled* the Egyptians." And these treasures that they thus carried with them out of Egypt were devoted to the service of God.

And then the other question, how they could be supposed to know it: the answer is a very easy one; God raised up Bezaleel and Aholiab, and other wise-hearted men whom the Spirit of God inspired to do it. Artizanship requires the teaching of God's Spirit just as much as Christianity. We ought to give to God the glory of a gifted intellect as well as the glory of a gracious heart. From him cometh down every good and every perfect gift—from the tiniest light to the blaze of meridian day; and to him we should give the glory of all that we are individually, that we are nationally, and that we hope to be when time shall be no more.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CONTINUATION OF INVENTORY OF THE TABERNACLE. WEALTH OF THE ISRAELITES. LOOKING-GLASSES.

THIS is just the continuation of the catalogue, to us the apparently dry and uninteresting inventory of temple goods, which began two chapters before, and is continued onward to the close of this, and almost of the next chapter also. It is the minute description of Moses fulfilling in fact those precepts which God had most minutely given for the construction of that edifice which was meant to be a type in its place of the temple; and the temple again, as we shall see, the type and symbol of a yet more glorious edifice—a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It is impossible to suppose that God gave such minute directions for the erection of this tabernacle if it was to be an ultimate thing, destitute of any prospective reference, without typical or symbolical import. The *minutiæ*, therefore, contained in the inventory that is here given—and those *minutiæ* done in answer to God's express command—indicate to us that there was something deeper in it than we see, and that it had a prospective reference which we on whom the ends of the world have come, can now very readily and very distinctly understand.

I stated before that the reason why all these things are so minutely recapitulated here is to show to us that Moses performed, by himself, or by the instrumentalities he employed, exactly and minutely every order, however great or however small, that God had given him on the mount.

The tabernacle, though a frail, must have been a very splendid thing. The wealth that was consumed or employed in the decoration of it was immense. It has been calculated, on the most just and accurate grounds, that the amount of gold and silver alone employed in the decoration of the tabernacle, must have been worth something near a quarter of a million of pounds sterling. I know it will be objected, How could these tribes of slaves, refugees from the brick-kilns of Egypt, have got so much gold? The answer is, that they went out with great riches from Egypt; and Egypt—the wealthiest land, then, in the world—gave them her treasures, and were too thankful to give them; some in order to get rid of them, others in gratitude and obligation that they felt to them for the benefits they had left behind them. It is certain, therefore, that they carried immense wealth with them. And when you recollect that this marching column that crossed the Red Sea, that traversed all the windings and the sinuosities of that intricate desert, amounted, men, and women, and children, to a population nearly equal to that of London—nearly three millions—having about seven hundred thousand men in the midst of it able to bear arms and able to work, you can see at once what a magnificent procession it was, what immense possessions—having each gone out

enriched from Egypt—they must have had; and how easily it was possible for them to execute all the orders here given; partly from the multiplicity of hands,—for every one knows that things are best done when each has his own part; and when the part assigned to him is very small, he is able to expend more care on it, and the result is the more satisfactory.

In the next place, there is an expression that occurs in the 8th verse that looks like contradiction, and requires to be explained. It says, "He made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the looking-glasses of the women." Now if these were made of glass, how could they be turned into brass, or gold, or silver? The truth is, our translators have used "looking-glass" as the popular phrase to denote something that reflects the likeness of the human countenance. We are so accustomed, for instance, to speak of a mile-stone on a turnpike road, that you may hear persons say, if a wooden post were substituted, "That is a wooden mile-stone." It is in itself a contradictory expression; it cannot be wood if it be stone; but we are so accustomed to use the material out of which it was originally made as representative of the thing itself, that when that material is changed we keep up the old name, even at the risk of perpetrating a very palpable contradiction. So here, our translators are so accustomed to think of a mirror as made of glass, that when speaking of a mirror they have called what was not glass "a looking-glass," when glass was not invented or thought of. The right transla-

tion would have been better—not better, perhaps, only it would have avoided the appearance of absurdity if it had been rendered, “He made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the *mirrors* of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.” These mirrors were small things, something of the size of an ordinary fan, with a handle; made first of all of copper, then of brass, some of them of gold, but ultimately almost universally of polished silver; occasionally of polished steel, but, owing to the susceptibility of steel to rust, the silver was preferred. In South America they have discovered very ancient mirrors, highly polished, made of stones—a kind of pyrites, and some other stones suited for that purpose. From a very early period such were introduced. According to Milton, Eve had none; but she made the sweet crystal streamlet her mirror, the most primitive of all; but soon after the Fall mirrors were introduced, and the substance they were almost universally made of was silver, with a highly polished surface. These mirrors, which the women used who assembled at the door of the tabernacle—partly as deaconesses, or Levites, or watchers—were cheerfully surrendered by them, though very dear to them, in order to form the laver in which the priests washed when they entered to offer sacrifice, and the other instruments that were employed in the service of the tabernacle.

I stated that all the gold and silver that was here employed was of very great value and amount; and that the tabernacle, though a temporary thing, must

have been really a very beautiful and splendid creation ; inferior, of course, to the temple that succeeded ; and that temple inferior still to that true temple—the Church of the living God, built of living stones.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

DETAILS OF THE BUILDING OF THE TABERNACLE.

SCARCELY a single remark remains to be made on the chapter—or the epitome of the construction of the tabernacle—which I have not made in the course of my expositions of what must seem very monotonous details merely when adopted as instructive reading for a Christian congregation. But, all this, however, had its value; and you will notice in this chapter that, at the close of every account of everything that they performed, there is added a clause which shows how minutely they carried out the commands of God —“as the Lord commanded Moses.” At the close of every separate branch you find that clause added; to denote that what God commanded minutely, they performed minutely, to the very letter. We have evidence in this chapter that engraving of stones had made very great progress, even at that early period of the world's history. And it is remarkable enough, that some of the engraved stones and jewels of ancient and pagan nations are so exquisitely beautiful, that our masters in the art have not been able to reach the perfection of other days.

It does seem, however, rather remarkable that

these tribes, who had been slaves in Egypt, should be able to engrave the delicate and difficult tracery that was required upon the precious stones—the diamond, the topaz, the carbuncle, and others—on which were recorded the names of the twelve tribes of Israel—there being twelve stones, and each stone having the name of a tribe; all on the breastplate of the high priest, when he went to make intercession for the people in the holy of holies.

You will notice, again, that a great many of the robes were made of pure linen. And this figure is evidently employed in the Apocalypse, when the question is asked, “What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?” And in another place he speaks of “linen white and clean, which is the righteousness of saints”—evidently showing that the white robes of the priests were typical of those moral robes which the priests and kings unto God shall wear for ever and ever, where they serve him in his tabernacle—the true tabernacle—without ceasing.

After all the details of the completion of the workmanship of the tabernacle, we read that Moses inspected the whole, as the master mind, pronounced it to be satisfactory when compared with the precept of God, and pronounced upon the people that blessing which he could utter in word, but which God impressed upon the hearts of all, as he still impresses upon the hearts of those that truly obey him.

CHAPTER XL.

CLOSE OF EXODUS. SCRIPTURAL FORMS. ROMISH RITES SUPPOSE
THE NEW TESTAMENT NOT WRITTEN. ALTARS. OILS. HOLY
WATER. TYPE OF A PROTESTANT CHURCH.

WE arrive, in the chapter I have read, at the close of one of the most deeply interesting Books in the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures. If this Book were expunged from the annals of the history of the world, we should have lost the most striking and impressive proofs of the providential, the gracious, and the merciful government of God. We have read in chapter after chapter, till it seemed almost bordering on the wearisome, minute and specific details of Moses fulfilling the minute and specific commands of God in the erection of the tabernacle. But I have told you before, that so minute specifications must have shown some ulterior end, or they would not have been given. It is impossible to suppose that the God who gave that magnificent revelation of himself—most magnificent in thought, magnificent in word—the Ten Commandments, could have descended to give the petty details contained in these chapters, if those details were ultimate and final things. We must, therefore, infer, as indeed we shall see, that all these had a distinctly typical

import, and were the rudiments and the foreshadows of great, and blessed, and glorious things to come.

In the next place, you will notice here, that if any modern church were to be built after the type and model of this tabernacle, or after the type and model of its more permanent development—the temple, it would in one sense, the builder might say, be most scriptural; for he could quote all these texts, and say, “Here is an order for a golden altar, and an order for a brazen altar; an order for holy water to wash in; an order for anointing oil to be an unction;” and he would really seem to have Scripture thoroughly upon his side: but then, it would be Scripture on his side not looked at in the light of the rest of Scripture. If you tear a text from its context you may prove anything upon earth, because you treat Scripture in a way you would not treat an Act of Parliament, a law, or a legal document of any sort. You must read every passage of Scripture in connection with and in the light of passages that directly and distinctly refer to it. So, when you read Exodus, which you ought to read, be sure to read it with commentaries, if you like; because commentaries are most useful when you use them as helps, and not as substitutes; though there is a wide distinction between the two. But when you read Exodus, read it especially with the inspired commentary of the Epistle to the Hebrews lying beside it; and you will see from that Epistle that a Christian church after the model of the ancient tabernacle would be in the letter most scriptural, but in fact most unscriptural and anti-christian; because all these things have here had their fulfilment; and when the antitype comes,

the type disappears ; when the sun rises, the stars retreat ; when the fruit is ripe, the blossom withers and falls away. The end and the object of this institute is come, and to keep it up still is to try to expunge two thousand years or three thousand years from the world's history, and to try to make ourselves Jews in the Christian and New Testament dispensation. Now this was the great blunder that misled a late most excellent minister of the Church of England, who embraced Romanism. He took the Books of Exodus and Leviticus, and he assumed that all this was the description of something that still should be ; and, doing so, he naturally landed in a church which certainly is the nearest approach in its outward details to the Levitical church—namely, the church of Rome. It has incense altars ; it has sacrificing altars ; it has anointing oil for extreme unction ; it has holy water to be sprinkled with when you enter ; it has vestments and robes of the richest kind and texture for the priests ; it has candles burning in the chancel, as the seven candles burned in the holy of holies. Nothing is more scriptural than the forms of the Romish church in the letter, and on the supposition that the New Testament was never written ; but admit the fact of a New Testament, and there is an end to its claims and its pretensions altogether ; for these things are all fulfilled by our Blessed Lord. For instance, the altar of brass on which sacrifices were offered is now lost in what is called by the Apostle, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the true altar—Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Then propitiatory sacrifices are now done away, for the simple reason that a

perfect sacrifice has been offered—a sacrifice whose merits fill all time, and consecrate all space; and so perfect that it needs not to be offered year by year in order to do what the Levitical sacrifices could not do; so perfect that it is as available 1800 years after it has been offered as if it had been offered this very day. We do not want these sacrifices; the end of them is come; the perfection of them is arrived; they lose their place, they cease to be appropriate, because that which they were meant to foreshadow is come; and now Aaron, and Moses, and Levi, disappear, and lose their function, their mission, and their office, in the splendour of the appearance of that Great High Priest, who, by one sacrifice, offered once for all, has redeemed the souls, and forgiven the sins, of all that believe in his blessed name.

So, in the same manner, the anointing oil now used for extreme unction in the Romish church—the apostle says, There is an end of that. He says, “Ye”—speaking to Christians; not to ministers, but speaking to Christians, and speaking—what would shock those that are offended at the laity being supposed to have any place in God’s house at all—to the elect laity, he says, “Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things;” and that unction is explained to be the Holy Spirit. Therefore we have the Holy Spirit to anoint our hearts; we do not want Aaron’s oil to anoint our heads. We have the true unction, and the type disappears when the antitype arrives.

So again, washing with water before they entered into the sanctuary. David had a clear apprehension of what was the meaning of that when he says, “I

will wash mine hands in innocency; so will I compass thy altar, O Lord;" showing that he, even in his day, a prince upon his throne, looked beyond the material symbol, and saw the moral significance of that symbol in the pure hand and the clean heart, as the best preparation for the worship and the service of God. And thus you will see that all these institutions of Levi and of Aaron had a distinct and definite relation to a future thing; and the Jews and the Israelites of that day—the more spiritual amongst them—saw along the vista of many thousand years, and like Abraham rested not on the material symbol, but saw Christ's day, and whilst they saw it they rejoiced.

And now, in this chapter we have the tabernacle finished and complete, with all its furniture and apparatus for worship, according to the command of God. I believe there is wanted—and I think I have taken the opportunity to say so before—still in modern times the true type of a truly Protestant church. What are called the mediæval cathedrals of Europe are most appropriate to Roman Catholic service: nothing can be more fit. I admire their beauty, I can appreciate their magnificence and grandeur; as mere appeals to what is sensuous and tasteful in man nothing can be more triumphant than the very stones seeming to blossom and to shape themselves into everything that is beautiful. They are most appropriate where there is a sacrificial altar in the east end; where there are processions in honour of the Virgin, of stoled and white-robed priests, the nave that will hold a large multitude, of great dimensions and of great length, and

where side-chapels for the saints are used, and where there are transepts—nothing can be more appropriate; they are exactly fitted for these. But when you go into some vast and noble cathedral in England, you find that there is service only in one end, and that three fourths of the cathedral are merely turned into a sort of museum, or a place for monuments, which are the mementos, and so far appropriate, of great and illustrious men. But still that shows that they are not fitted, and were not meant, for our service. The only attempt to take possession of them is in Scotland, where they make the nave into one parish church, and the choir into another parish church; and thus out of one Romish church they make two good Protestant churches. But it is quite plain to me that these are not the proper edifices. And so remarkable is this, that a very distinguished Northern divine, very noted for his ultra notions, has now come to the conclusion, and avowed it, I believe, that mediæval cathedrals are not fitted for Protestant worship, and that there still is required the type and the model of a perfect Protestant church, fitted for perfect Protestant worship. And that one can easily conceive. The great use of the Protestant church is, first, prayer or worship; and, secondly, preaching and teaching; and if one is to lead the worship, the people ought to be so situated that all can hear him. A church, if one is to preach to be understood, ought to be so appointed that all can see, and hear, and be enlightened. Let it be as tasteful as you like; I think it is wrong that we should dwell in splendid mansions, and God's house be a barn; let it be as tasteful and as beautiful

as you like. But when you do, as I was reading in the newspapers they have done in an English Presbyterian chapel in Southampton, not taken up the old Romish saints, which is bad enough, but canonized modern Christian men, and put them into the church, cutting them out of stone—thus breaking the second commandment, which says, “Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, nor in the earth beneath,”—it seems to me intolerable. We have no business with pictures in the house of God, of Deity; we do not want pictures of human beings. It was the commencement of such practices that led to an utter apostasy; and therefore anything approaching the images of men, saints, and angels in the house of God seems to me incompatible with the command, “Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, nor in the earth beneath.”

It is quite true we need to state this in connection with the fact,—that the true church, after all, is not the tabernacle, nor is it the temple, nor is it granite, nor brick, nor wood—but the company of living Christians. The church is the company of believers; the cathedral is merely its covering from the wind and the rain. The church is within, the building may or may not be. There is a true church—the germ of a true church—wherever two or three are met together in Christ’s name; for, “there,” says he, “I am in the midst of them.”

THE SHECHINAH.

“ Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.”—Exodus xl. 34—38.

I HAVE selected the passage I have read, not simply because it refers to the chapter, but because it is one of a successive series of allusions to this glory, or cloud, or pillar of fire, which we have frequently read, and on which I have been able to offer comparatively so unsatisfactory instruction.

I have traced every allusion in Scripture to this cloud, or pillar of fire—this glory that shone between the cherubim, and rested on the tabernacle; and I have tried to gather from all the allusions to it, contained and scattered throughout holy Scripture, what was its object, its significant import and allusion to

the times, and the truths that the New Testament reveals. I will therefore endeavour to direct your minds to those passages of Scripture, as briefly as I possibly can, which refer to this subject. We have read so much of it that we must naturally desire to understand precisely what it was, what its meaning is, and what profitable lessons we, on whom the ends of the world are come, may gather from this supernatural phenomenon.

First, let me notice, it was called by the ancient Jews by the name—a name extremely significant—their SHECHINAH. This word—the *shechinah*—is derived from a Hebrew word, *shakan*, which means “to dwell,” or “to have a habitation;” and it was called “the habitation,” or, “the *shechinah*,” because this glory—ever marching with them—a reddened pillar of fire, a majestic appearance by night, and a dark cloud towering from earth to the sky by day—was called the *shechinah*, because it afterwards rested on the lid of the mercy-seat in the chancel, or the holy of holies; and there, from between the cherubim, and from the mercy-seat, sent forth its bright beams as the symbol and the proof that God was present in the midst of Israel. All those passages therefore that appear in Scripture, speaking of God’s dwelling, are allusive to this. That beautiful Psalm, the 80th, “O Thou that dwellest between the cherubim,” translated into its allusive language, would be, “O Thou who art the *shechinah* between the cherubim;” or, in the language that we have been reading, “O Thou who art the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night; the glory of thy people Israel, between the cherubim and on the mercy-seat.” So,

again, in such passages as these:—Psalm lxxiv. 2, “Mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt;” a passage rendered thus by the Chaldee paraphrast, that is, a commentator among the Jews—“Wherein thou hast made the *shechinah* to dwell.” In Haggai i. 8, it is in our version, “Build the house, and I will take pleasure therein, and be glorified:” the Jewish commentator translates it, “Build the house, and I will make my *shechinah* to dwell therein,”—showing that the Jews always understood this habitation or dwelling of the Most High to have a definite reference to the *shechinah*: and this *shechinah*, as I shall show you by other passages of Scripture, was the representative symbol of a present and a propitious God.

But there seems at first a sort of contradiction between the words of Scripture. We find that Moses and Aaron, in their intercourse with God, speak constantly of *seeing* God; and we shall find in other parts of Scripture distinct assertions that God never was seen, is not seen, and cannot be seen. Let us, for instance, refer to that passage in John i. 18: “No man hath seen God at any time.” Colossians i. 15: “The image of the invisible God.” 1 Timothy vi. 16: “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see.”

Now, all these definitions square with our own apprehensions of God,—that he is a Spirit, invisible, and not to be beheld by the human eye, or by any created being. But, having these passages so plain, let me read other passages now which seem directly to contradict them. Exodus xxiv. 9:

“ Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel ; and they *saw the God of Israel* ; ” “ they saw God, and did eat and drink. ” Exodus xxxiii. 11 : “ And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face. ” Isaiah vi. 1 : “ I saw also the Lord, sitting upon a throne, high, and lifted up. —Then said I, Woe is me ! for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips : for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. ” Now, how do we reconcile passages so apparently contradictory ? Let me just say, if this book or composition had been that of a man who was writing what he knew not to be true, and wishing to palm upon the world a document as Divine which was really human, he would have taken care to avoid such apparently palpable contradictions as these ; because they are not the incidental contradictions of a fallible mind, forgetting itself, and falling into error ; but they are evidently so decided, and so reiterated, that there must be something beyond the letter that will show there is light and harmony where there seems to be palpable and irreconcilable discord. Now, what will explain that ? The first series of expressions, “ God is invisible, ” are all most true. The second series of expressions, namely, Moses saw God, Isaiah beheld God, and Nadab and Abihu also saw God, are to be explained by this,—that it was the *shechinah* that they saw ; and that *shechinah*—what I have called the pillar of cloud, and the pillar of fire—that glory was to Israel precisely what Christ—the brightness of the *shechinah*, the brightness of his glory—is to us, on whom the ends

of the world are come. In other words, there always has been a manifestation of God to the creature in a form in which he could either see, or hear, or know, or understand him. The *shechinah* was God visible to Israel, as Jesus is God manifest to us. While it is true, therefore, that no man hath seen the invisible God, it was no less true that they had seen God face to face,—speaking from the cloud, manifesting himself from the glory, and marching with them in majestic procession through the wide desert till they arrived at the borders of Canaan; the glory then no more to sojourn in the desert, but to rest for a little season between the cherubim in the tabernacle, or the mercy-seat of the temple.

We have, therefore, in the *shechinah*, the ancient revelation or manifestation of God; the type and symbol of Him who is to us God manifest in the flesh. Moses went near to it; and when the glory was so great that he could not bear it, it was the darkness opening, or a rent taking place in the cloud, and the bright beams coming out. I can conceive nothing more beautifully descriptive, as a type of our blessed Lord, than a mass of dark cloud embosoming in its centre a brilliant and intolerable splendour: Deity in humanity; the invisible God in the shape of the human. Out of that cloud God also spoke to Moses, and made known his mind and law.

In order to show that the Jews always understood that the *shechinah* was in some way associated with the Messiah, I will quote from a Jewish commentator, who has rendered several passages of Scripture that allude to this. For instance, in

Genesis iii. 8: "They heard"—Adam and Eve heard—"the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden." I believe that was not the Father, but the Second Person in the glorious Trinity. I believe it is true from the beginning, the Father no man has seen, nor can see; and that the Great Being that had constant intercourse with Adam and Eve in Paradise, with Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees, with the Jews in Egypt, with the Israelites in the desert, with Solomon and David in the temple, downward to the advent of Christ in the flesh, was the Second Person in the glorious and adorable Trinity. And the Jews, singularly enough, whose testimony in this respect must be very valuable in that it was undesigned, are our best auxiliary here. That passage, "They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden:" the Chaldee paraphrase renders, "They heard the voice of the Word of God walking in the garden." The passage, "God appeared unto Jacob:" the Chaldee paraphrase reads, "The Word of the Lord appeared unto Jacob," Exodus xxx. 6: "Where I will meet with thee:" the Chaldee paraphrase has rendered, "Where I will appoint for thee my Word." Numbers xi. 20: "Ye have despised the Lord which is among you." The paraphrase renders it, "Ye have contemned the Word of the Lord, which is the *shechinah* dwelling among you." Deuteronomy i. 30: "The Lord your God which goeth before you,"—language allusive to the pillar of cloud, you observe—is given thus: "The Word of the Lord thy God, thy leader." Again, in the 32nd verse: "The Lord your God, who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to

pitch your tents in, in fire by night," is paraphrased, "The Word of the Lord who went before you as your leader by night." In every instance, you observe, the Jew assumes that the Jehovah who appeared to Adam and Eve in Paradise, who marched the children of Israel through the wide-spread desert, was not the Father, but the Word, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ.

What will show also that this was the idea of the Jews, is John's own allusion to it in his Gospel, where he says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God;" and Jesus is called "The Word," because "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners *spake* in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." God's speaking voice to mankind is Christ. What is Christ? God's love audible, God's mercy visible, God's justice unveiled: God in all his glory revealed to man; brought within the horizon of man's apprehension, and comprehended by man as far as it is possible.

And if other arguments were wanting, one text is conclusive. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us." A Hebrew, translating the New Testament out of Greek into his own tongue, would render it, "The Word was made flesh, and was the *shechinah* in the midst of us,"—or, "the tabernacle containing the *shechinah* in the midst of us." The language is so allusive to the *shechinah* that it is impossible not to see that the Evangelist John meant that the *shechinah* was a type of our Blessed Lord. So, in the burning bush; which was not a bush—whether bramble, or furze, or anything else, that

burned with material fire—but that blazed by the presence of the splendour that shone between the cherubim, and was the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night.

It was this same glory, we are told, that appeared to Abraham, and on Sinai at the giving of the Law ; on Mount Sinai, where there was thunder, and lightning, and tempest, and all that could terrify. The lightning that was there, the glory with which the mount was crowned as with a fiery coronal, was, I believe, the *shechinah*. And the proof of it is this :—In Deuteronomy iv. 12, we read : “ And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire ; ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no *similitude*.” And, again, in the 5th chapter, at the 22nd verse : “ These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice ; and he added no more. And he wrote them on two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.” You see there that Moses, who was competent to pronounce, even if he had not been inspired, says it was the *shechinah*, or the glory, that appeared on Mount Sinai, and spoke to the children of Israel.

Now if this be so—if the *shechinah* was the type of Jesus—and I think the passages I have quoted prove it, and especially the statement of John that the Word was made flesh, and was the *shechinah* in the tabernacle in the midst of us ; for that is the meaning—if this was the type of Christ, then the inference that we draw from it is most conclusive that Jesus was what we know and are sure that he is—Jehovah, in the highest possible sense of that ex-

pression. To show that this *shechinah* was Jehovah, we find in Exodus xiv. 19,—“And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea: and the Lord”—evidently identifying here the Jehovah,—angel of the Lord,—and cloud. This identification will be more manifest to you when I tell you that the phrase, “Angel of the Lord”—about whom we read so often in Exodus—is literally translated, “The sent one Jehovah.” It is not in the Hebrew, “Angel of the Lord:” it is *Melech Yehovah*—literally, “Angel Jehovah.” And this angel of the Lord was not a created intelligence, but plainly Jehovah himself. And in Exodus xxxiii. 8, we have, if possible, a still more distinct allusion to it. “And it came to pass, when Moses went out into the tabernacle, that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent-door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle. And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle”—mark the words—“the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door; and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. And Jehovah spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.” There can be no mis-

take here that this cloudy pillar, which was the outer shrine of the inner glory that talked to Moses, spoke to him face to face, is called in this very passage the *shechinah*. And, what is still more striking, we read, in Isaiah lxiii. 9, that "in all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them;"—that is, the cloud, this cloudy pillar, the pillar of fire, was called by the Israelites, "the presence of the Lord." The shewbread, which was called "the bread of faces," or "of his presence." "The angel of his presence" is the same being as "the angel Jehovah," the same as "Jehovah," the same as the pillar of fire by night, and the pillar of cloud by day. And this very same Being is alluded to by Malachi, where God himself speaks, and says, "Behold, I will send my angel;" it is in our version very properly "my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord"—Jehovah—"whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." Here you have God the Father—the Lord of hosts—predicting that Jehovah shall come to his temple—(or, translated into the language of Exodus—"the glory," "the *shechinah* in the midst of the tabernacle")—"shall come to his temple, and dwell in it, even the Lord whom ye delight in."

We have in all these passages, clear proof of identity between this glory and the Jehovah; and if that glory was the type of Christ, it is identity no less complete between Jehovah and the Lord Jesus Christ.

One other passage I will read, which seems to prove what I have been saying. In Deuteronomy i. 31 : “ And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the Lord thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place. Yet in this thing ye did not believe the Lord your God. Who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to show you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day.” Thus in Deuteronomy it is expressly stated that the pillar of fire by night, and the pillar of cloud by day, was Jehovah going before them.

Now, after reading all these indications of Jehovah, the Messiah, as the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, just see what significance the 1st chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews has when you read it in this light : “ God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds ; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high ; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee ? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son ? And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten

into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels of God he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." You observe that God, who in times past spake to us by the cloudy pillar, hath in these last days spoken to us by Him who is its antitype—His Son. God, who in times past guided them by the burning brightness of the pillar of fire by night, now guides you by Him who is the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person. And the angel Jehovah that guided you through the desert was not a created angel—"for unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son. And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." Therefore, argues the apostle with irresistible logic, the pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day, with Jehovah—the Angel Jehovah—that spoke from it, was not a created angel, but Jesus Christ himself, the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person.

Having seen up to this point the identity between the two, let me mention another fact which will still further illustrate it. This angel, this pillar of fire by night and pillar of cloud by day, was God's medium of communication with the children of Israel; for we read in Exodus xxxiii. 9—which passage I have already quoted—that "the Lord talked with Moses. And all the people saw

the cloudy pillar." When he wished to know what was the mind of God, he approached this pillar of cloud by day, and pillar of fire by night: and what that was to Israel, Jesus Christ is to us. Their *shechinah* was the type; Jesus is the true *Shechinah*: from him we are to hear clearer and better words than Moses heard from the perishable type. And the whole New Testament is evidently allusive to this. A very remarkable evidence of the identity between this glory, or the *shechinah*, and Christ, is what the apostle says: "We beheld his glory"—or his *shechinah*—"as the only-begotten of the Father." And St. Peter, alluding to the Mount Tabor, says, "We were eye-witnesses of his glory." And to show that Peter had in his mind, even when he had almost lost his senses on the Mount in the midst of that excessive splendour, some clear apprehension of the connection between what he saw there, and what we read here, he said, "Let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." What could have put *tabernacle* into Peter's head? His beholding the *shechinah*: and, in the language of the Gospel, "not knowing what he said," but having a dim sense of connection in his mind between the glory on Mount Tabor and the ancient tabernacle, he said, "Let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." It is, therefore, I think, perfectly clear that this *shechinah*—whether as the leader and the guide of Israel, or as the oracle that taught them—was no less than the Lord Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh. So that we have in Christ all that can be known of Deity, and more than Israel ever could have known.

You say—what is quite true—“ We do not see Christ now.” But that does not matter. It is not the features of the face that constitute the man : it is the words he has spoken, and made permanent ; it is the acts he has done, whose echoes live. Take, as illustration, any great historian, or great orator, or poet, or statesman : I feel that to comprehend the man, to understand his character, to have a thorough apprehension of what he was, I do not need a picture of him. Call to mind any great statesman, great soldier, or sailor ; read their documents or despatches, their communications or writings, or the history of their deeds, and you comprehend them perfectly. I comprehend Lord Nelson or the Duke of Wellington more distinctly at this moment, though they are not to be seen in the flesh, than ever I could do by merely seeing them. Now, to illustrate heavenly things by earthly, I have a more clear comprehension of Jesus from reading my New Testament than ever Peter, John, or Paul had by seeing him upon the streets of Jerusalem and upon the fields of Palestine. Jesus is here ; so that when I listen to those words that ever live, and never die, I hear Christ speaking : when I read of him marching upon the wave, and laying his hand upon the ocean’s mane, and it obedient as the steed to his rider, I can see his power : when I read of him at the grave of Lazarus, dropping a tear upon the dead dust, what an evidence that he was my brother ! but, speaking to the departed soul, and it returns to the shrine it had forsaken, what an evidence of him as my God ! When I see all this, I comprehend Jesus most thoroughly. I have the glory in the cloud present

with me now. I need no picture of him. I need not his personal presence now: one day that also will be. I can clearly hear God's voice and see God's character in Christ; and know and be assured that he is—what the Unitarian is so deluded in denying—God himself, in the attributes, and the functions, and within the limits of my humanity.

Now let us gather from all this two or three lessons, practically instructive to us; and also still further explanatory. The cloud, we are told in this passage, covered the tent, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. This tabernacle was simply a beautiful erection, of purple, and blue, and linen, and sockets, and pins, and planks, until the glory rushed into it, and filled it with its unapproachable splendour. This is "the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel." No beauty in that erection was of any avail till the glory went into it: it was a tabernacle, beautiful and complete when Moses finished it; it became a choice palace and a holy sanctuary the instant that the glory entered into it.

It is so still. You will comprehend now that beautiful text, and see its force:—"Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Let ten thousand people be in the largest cathedral of Europe, and there is no church over them, and no church among them: there is a grand cathedral, there is a mighty crowd; but let Christ, the glory, enter into the midst of them: let it be true, "Met in my name, and I in the midst of them," and the crowd becomes a con-

gregation, the mighty multitude becomes a church, and the glory of the Lord is there in the midst of them. So again: "Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world," that is, the pillar of fire by night and cloud by day. The truth is, therefore, (and what a pity that this is not known in every church, and chapel, and cathedral of England,) that a church is not a building, neither a *basilica*, nor a cathedral, nor a chapel, nor a meeting-house; but it is, the company of God's people. What makes a church is, a people met in Christ's name, with Christ the *Shechinah* dwelling in the midst of them. Nothing else can make a church. All the bishops and general assemblies of Christendom cannot do it; all the architects and builders of the world cannot do it. It is a mother that makes a home; it is a queen that makes a palace: it is Christ among a people that consecrates a crowd into a church.

This presence of Jesus, the true *Shechinah*, is now the object of faith—it will one day be the object of sight. I have said that I comprehend Christ perfectly, from his own picture of himself. And the best picture of Christ surely is the New Testament. It does seem to me so stupid in ecclesiastics to try and get up oil paintings of our blessed Lord, when we have the inner portrait complete and perfect, from his own inspiring Spirit. I have said, we comprehend Christ now—we comprehend him by faith, believing the testimony of the Gospel; but a day comes when we shall see him face to face. And from what I proceed to quote it seems as if this tabernacle was the beginning, or the rude sketch,

of some grand thing that is to be. I quote from Revelation xxi., where the language is clearly allusive to it: "I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." You notice how John has no idea of the church being a house—it is a company of living people, represented by the bride adorned for her husband. Now mark what follows: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the *tabernacle* of God is with men!" Once it was in the desert with the Jews, in the temple with the Jews still; in Christ *for* men; then in the Millennium it will be *with* men—in the midst of them; and he will dwell, (mark the language,) he will dwell *with* them—literally, "He will be the *shechinah* in the midst of them"—and God himself shall be with them—visibly manifested in the midst of them: and he shall be their God. And then the tenth verse: "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city,"—that is, the bride—"the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God"—being the *shechinah*. The *shechinah* is not with the Jew literally, the *shechinah* is not with the Jew truly, because he denies Christ; but it is with us by faith: but a day comes—the sound of whose approach reverberates through Christendom at this moment—when the glory—the *shechinah*—shall be revealed in the midst of the world, and shall be with us.

Let me notice this other lesson. When the glory descended on the tabernacle, we learn that it filled the whole house. "The glory of the Lord filled the

whole house"—that is, every ray of light in the midst of that tabernacle was from Christ. And if Christ in the midst of his people be to us what the glory was in the midst of the tabernacle, then, in the house of God, Christ's name should be above every name; Christ's glory should supersede all glory; Christ's presence should fill the hearts of his people. Hence, all such names as Church of England, Church of Scotland, Wesleyan Church, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Independent—all these, that we are apt to glory in, are only the proofs that we glory in our shame; they are the evidences of our childhood in Christianity. Just as the glory of the *shechinah* filled the whole tabernacle, and no light besides, so Christ's name should overspread the whole sanctuary: and the names of Reformers, however illustrious, should not be legible to me. In the days of Athens—its most palmy days—an architect raised a magnificent temple; but he put his own name as the architect on a very prominent place; and that so shocked the æsthetic taste of that cultivated people that they ordered that part of the building to be utterly destroyed. Now, whenever Luther's, or Wesley's, or Knox's, or Ridley's, or Latimer's, or Augustine's, or St. Jerome's names are heard in the sanctuary, or seen, or prided in, it is man in the 19th century eclipsed by Athens nearly three thousand years ago—trying to introduce the tiny rushlight of the creature in the place of Christ—the *Shechinah*—the all and in all.

In the next place, we read that Moses, when he approached the tabernacle, was unable to enter in because of the excessive glory in the midst of it. In

this respect there seems to have remained in the tabernacle a portion of the peculiar dispensation of which it was a part. God was revealed on Sinai as the consuming fire ; and some sparks of that consuming fire appear to have been mingled with the revelation of God's glory. We must not forget that the Jewish economy was imperfect ; that it was only a step in the grand progression ; and that a great deal of Sinai, revealed in the Jewish economy, is only now superseded by that better Mount, which is the spiritual centre in our economy. It seems that the glory was so intense that Moses could not enter ; and, singular enough, in the case of the temple, the same thing occurred ; for we read in 1 Kings viii. 10 : "And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord." And what shows that there was judgment or terror in some degree connected with this, is that in one of the great judgments recorded in the Apocalypse, we have this very same figure employed to denote its terrible character. We read in Revelation xv. 7 : "And one of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power ; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." Thus, therefore, there seems to us, what, no doubt, it conveyed also to Moses and the children of Israel, that in the *shechinah*, as mani-

fested then, there was a remnant of the burning and consuming fire that there was on Mount Sinai; but in our case this is all gone, and Christ now is the manifestation of God's glory—so real that I can see God in him, and see him to be so truly my brother, that I can approach to him not as Moses approached—unable to penetrate further because of the unearthly splendour—but I can approach with boldness to the throne of grace, because I have a Great High Priest, who ever liveth to make intercession for me.

The next practical remark I will make is this, that this pillar of cloud by day turned into a pillar of fire by night, by the cloud simply reddening, was the sole guide of all the children of Israel through the desert. Now, mark what they were to do, and they are a precedent for us :—They were not to select the road that was geographically the nearest; they took a road that was most circuitous: first they advanced forward, then they retreated backward, then they moved forward; and they occupied forty years in their journey, when it might have been accomplished in the course of twelve or eighteen months. Neither Aaron, nor Moses, nor Joshua were to select the course that was geographically the nearest to Canaan: they were not even to select the road that was smoothest: they were not to avoid nooks, and bays, and firths of the sea, that stretched into the land, and might seem to them an obstruction: they were simply to fasten their eyes upon the cloud, and follow it; not looking at the road they traversed whether it was rough or smooth: their business was to look only upon the cloud, and follow it, wherever it led them. And, my dear friends, is not this our course?

We are not responsible for the length of the road ; we are only responsible for obeying the command of Him who has placed us in it. In walking through life, we are not to look to the right, nor to the left ; but to look to Christ. And it seems to me—what I did not think of before—that the beautiful passage, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, “ Seeing we are compassed with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run the race set before us, looking unto Jesus,” alludes to this—we look not to the nature and the roughness of the road, nor the length of the race,—we look neither to the right, nor to the left, nor before, nor behind ; but to the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night. How simple does a Christian’s course become, when his eye is riveted on the Lord of glory ; and he follows him, not gathering from others the route that he is to take, but looking to Jesus ! And how intensely Protestant, let me add, is that ! The Apostle says, “ Seeing we are compassed with so great a cloud ” —that is, a multitude—“ of witnesses,” these witnesses, I believe, the spirits of the just made perfect —“ seeing we are compassed with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run the race set before us ” —looking at the cloud of witnesses ? No ; nor at any of them. It is, literally, in the original Greek, *αφορωντες*—looking off from the cloud of witnesses, in order to look to Jesus, the Author and the Finisher of our faith. Let us, then, run the race ; let us traverse the desert ; let us march towards Emmanuel’s land, looking only for guidance, for strength, for pardon, for peace, for success, to the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by

night,—the brightness of the Father's glory, God manifest in the flesh, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And, in the next place, as another practical remark, let us hear his voice, and his voice only. The Jews listened to the voice from the cloud; the Christian is to listen to Christ's voice. But what is his voice? It is a voice unspent in eighteen centuries; it sounds along the ages now, as if it had just been uttered. Every man that has the Bible in his hand—as all may have it—hears that voice.

Every one that has that New Testament in his hand, has the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night. And these Chinese revolutionists—to whom we propose sending Bibles—if they may be called by that name,—anxious to get rid of the usurping and intruding Tartar dynasty, and evidently taught the leading truths of Christianity—for I have read accounts, as lent to me by a friend, with great care and with great delight,—these Chinese, in getting the New Testament from us, may, by God's blessing, see the necessity for a nobler and a more important revolution than that of a dynasty—of a more mighty change than that of political *régimes*; may, by God's grace, become a fulfilment, as I believe they will be soon, of what is to take place in the very last days of all, when a nation shall be born in a day.

The voice of God is everywhere. Amid the roaring of the waves, amid the tumbling avalanches, in the din of battle, in all places, in all times, and under all circumstances, we may get directions from the *shechinah*—guidance from the pillar of cloud.

God has spoken to us, in these last days, by his Son. If they escape not who listened not to Moses and the prophets, how much less shall we escape, if we trample under foot the words of the Son of God!

May He bless to us these truths, and to his name be praise. Amen.

THE VAILED PROPHET :

OR, THE GLORY DIMMED.

“ And it came to pass, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses’ hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone ; and they were afraid to come nigh him. And Moses called unto them ; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him : and Moses talked with them. And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh : and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face. But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he took the vail off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses’ face shone : and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.”
Exodus xxxiv. 29—35.

“ Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech : and not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished : but their minds were blinded : for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament ;

which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now, the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."—2 CORINTHIANS iii. 12—18.

It appears that Moses on the mount, in contact with the *shechinah* or glory of the Lord, carried off a portion of it, shining from his countenance; the outward material splendour—the symbol of inward repose—attracted the notice, and, as we shall find in the sequel of the narrative, alarmed the minds, of the children of Israel. Before I advert to it further, however, let me notice the fact, that Moses went up, as we are told, to the Mount Sinai alone, and he was there with the Lord alone forty days and forty nights. He went up into the mount alone. Of course in parts of his conduct there was much that was official, and therefore not imitable by us; but in his own character and conduct, too, there was much that was personal, and therefore a precedent for us. He went up to the mountain-top, where God was pleased to reveal himself, and to whose presence he had been invited, and there alone he saw what God was, and beheld his glory. We too should go up to the mount alone; we too should draw near to God in personal and individual communion. The religion of many is that of the crowd; it burns only amid sympathy—it is kindled only by contact with thousands; and the instant that the crowd is dissolved, and they go alone into their homes and their

closets, all their light is put out, all their warmth is cooled: religion with them is a social and public sacrifice, not at all a personal thing. But, if I understand Christianity aright, it is emphatically the individual's transaction of an everlasting matter with God alone; and he that has never held communion, converse, conversation if you like—for it does not need the lips to speak to God; the heart speaks to him and he can speak to the heart—has reason to question the depth at least, if not the reality and substance, of his own religion. Let us not forget, as an illustration of religion as a personal thing, that God looks at each individual in the solemn assembly alone just as if there were no other individual in the universe; he looks at each heart as minutely as if the only one in this gigantic metropolis. The interior of solemn cathedrals, the intricacies of individual hearts, are luminous and transparent to the God with whom we have to do. He hears the beating of a babe's heart as distinctly as he hears the rolling of the thunder or the worship of the cherubim. If we could only realize that one fact—if we could only insulate ourselves from the crowd, and feel that we are just as naked to God, as clearly seen by him, and present as great an interest to him as if he has nothing else to do in the world than to minister to me, and forgive me, and sanctify me,—our religion would thus, by becoming more personal, become more deep and real.

I think it is one of the grandest features of Deity, that the smallest thing indicates an expenditure of labour as great as the very largest. Take the wing of the minutest insect, you will find

that the texture of the web is as exquisitely woven as is the manipulation of a fixed star, or the shaping of the big bright sun; so exquisitely done is the petal of the wildest field-flower or the wing of the beetle or the bee, that, on examining it with all the aids of microscopic analysis, we could almost feel as if God had spent the last five thousand years in doing nothing else but shaping and weaving it. It is the evidence of his greatness that the very least things that the microscope detects are as elaborately, as exquisitely, as beautifully done as the very largest things that the telescope brings within the horizon of our view. And if that be so in the material world, it is an analogy, and so far a proof, that he does the same in the spiritual world. A believer's sorrow, his sighs, his wants, his woes, the world cannot see; griefs and tears that cannot wash out his sorrowful reminiscences; his longings and his yearnings after a perfection and a beauty that he sees looming in the distance, but that he cannot yet grasp—God understands; and every instant, by night and by day, and everywhere, upon the mountain and in the valley, and on the ocean—I repeat the precious thought, a thought that is worth repeating—there God is present, as if he had nothing else in the universe to do but to minister to that individual's soul, and make it holy and happy, and fit for heaven.

If this be so, let us try to realize it. The fact is, it is not more knowledge that we want, not more novelty brought into sermons, but to have the same precious truths reiterated, and set in such lights that we cannot mistake them, and accompanied with the prayer over them that He that can preach to the

heart would so impress upon that heart those pointed, personal, sanctifying truths, that you shall feel your soul and God to be the only two grand things in the universe worth recollecting, knowing, loving. That we ought sometimes to try to feel alone with God I may inculcate by reminding you that we must all die alone. What a thought is that ! The physician may accompany you to the sick bed, beloved relatives may sympathize with your sufferings and weep over your departure ; but no friend on earth can walk with you through the valley of the shadow of death—you must die, in the strictest sense of that expression, *alone*. Is it not well, then, when we know that all human friends must leave us, or rather, when we must leave them, save One that sticketh closer than a brother—is it not well to hold communion and fellowship, private and alone, with him now ; so that when we come into the valley of the shadow of death we may find it no strange place, but trod smooth by our Elder Brother's foot, resounding with his own blessed welcome, and teaching us to sing—not to say, “ O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? ”

We must stand at the judgment-seat of Christ—and I say it with all the recollections of the description of it—alone. True, there will be a great multitude grouping around the Great White Throne, with different aspects, hopes and fears within, and lights and shadows, that indicate fears and hopes, playing on the countenance without ; but in that solemn hour every one of us shall feel at the judgment-seat alone, absorbed by what each of us is within, and what God has been to us before. We shall feel,

amid its light and its glory, as if none but God and we were there. The silence of that moment will be so intense that every man shall hear the beating of his own heart. You know that in moments of the dreaddest suspense—upon the eve of battle, the calm that precedes is breathless and inconceivable; and so, at any great crisis, men hold their breaths in silence. At the judgment-seat you will feel so truly alone, amid the intense light and the awful silence, that you will feel as if God and you—the Judge and yourself before the judgment-seat—were the only twain in the universe. How important that we should now be alone with Him whom we shall meet at the judgment-seat! How important that we should not meet a stranger there! How joyous and blessed will be that view when, upon the throne of judgment, is seen the Lamb who spoke to us from the throne of grace; and when we shall hear, not a new and strange sound, but the old and familiar accents, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!” Thus Moses went up the mount, and held communion with God alone.

Let me remind you, too, in the next place, that of all things Satan will make the strongest efforts to avert the possibility of personal communion with God. He will not care that you should be religious in the crowd if he can only prevent your holding communion with God alone. To prevent this he will give you every excitement you can desire; he will divert you with the prospects of business; he will involve you in all the cares and pursuits of a world that must pass away; he will tempt you with every

pleasure ; he will draw you under the influence of every attraction, if he can only keep you from personal, close communion and intercourse with God. But, you may depend upon it, there will be no deep religion in public unless it be fed from springs in individual lives ; there will be no warmth in the sanctuary that will last unless it be kindled from individual hearts. It is the religion of the closet that makes so real and so pure the religion of the sanctuary and of the church without. Some perhaps may ask, How is it possible to have personal communion with God ? We are so constituted that by an introspective effort of the mind—looking within—and a circumspective effort, if I may use a corresponding phrase, looking around, you can hold intercourse with the absent and the distant. If a mother has a son in a distant land, she can hold communion with him ; she can think what he was ; she can recollect what his temptations, his weaknesses, were ; and she can conceive perfectly how he feels towards her and thinks of her : and thus, by an intercourse more rapid than that of electricity itself, the broad deep seas are bridged, and the parent holds communion with the son who is far distant from home. And if this be possible in the things of this lower sphere, where all is imperfect, and limited, and obscure, who shall conceive it impossible for God, that fills all space, penetrates all recesses, is here, and there, and everywhere, to hold communion with us, or for us, conscious of his presence, to hold communion with him ? What is prayer to him but speaking to God—and what are answers from heaven but God's reply to us ? And wherever, therefore,—

in the closet, or in your study, or in the world, or amid the array of this world's difficulties,—wherever you may be, you can lift up the heart and feel, “Thou God seest me;” or say, “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside thee;” or, “Lord Jesus, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom;” or, “Blessed Lord, I will arise and come to thee, my Father.” Wherever such expressions rise from the heart, on the stones of the Exchange, on the floor of Parliament, behind the counter, or in the counting-house, they are ten times more precious than when they are statedly expressed at morning dawn and at evening close; because they are the spontaneous, the unprovoked expressions of a heart that in its silent depths is in communion with God, and lets forth only the incidental evidences of its deep and solemn, but silent, intercourse maintained within.

Thus, then, we see what is meant by being alone with God, and having personal communion with him. And we may say that we always climb this mount when we pray, when we read God's word, and when we listen to God's voice, as proclaimed by the preacher. But in all these we must recollect this, that the only way of access is Christ Jesus; whether we pray or praise, whether we speak to God or God speaks to us, remember, the way is not the mountain that Moses climbed, but the sacrifice that Jesus made, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father but by me.” Moses before he went up the mount offered sacrifice; we, before we enter into communion with God, have

no sacrifice to offer ; for this Christ died once for all ; by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified ; and we have access to God by one Spirit, through Christ Jesus.

Now, having thus seen the lessons that we may draw from Moses' holding communion with God alone upon the mount, let me notice another feature in the passage, where it is said that his face shone with the glory when he came down from the mount. His immediate contact with Deity seems to have left a portion of its material splendour radiating the countenance of him who was admitted to so close and intimate communion with God. It is rather a singular fact, that in the Vulgate translation of the Bible—that is, the ancient Vulgate executed by Jerome in the fourth century—the rendering of this passage is, “And Moses had horns upon his face ;” that is the literal translation of the passage. And if any of you have seen the paintings of the ancient masters, you will find Moses always represented upon the canvas with two horns on his head, which is evidence how completely a tradition has become belief, and more especially how it is possible for a church that assumes to be infallible to start upon a wrong basis notwithstanding its infallibility, and to fall into very great absurdities. The Hebrew word for a ray or a beam from the sun is קרן, *karan*, that is, something that shoots from the sun. The same word is also used for a horn ; because as a horn seems to shoot from the head of an animal, so a ray, or a sunbeam, seems to shoot from the sun ; and the Vulgate has translated the word here which ought to have been rendered “rays,” or “beams,” by the

word "horns." Our translators have in one instance made a similar mistake; and one which needs to be explained in order to be corrected. In the prophet Habakkuk, in the third chapter, at the fourth verse it says, in a very sublime portraiture of God, "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand." Now that is a perfectly monstrous representation if one were to understand it literally; but when you recollect that the word here translated "horn" is, properly rendered, "ray," or beam of light, then it seems perfectly obvious and natural. "His brightness was as the light; he had *beams of splendour radiating* from his hand." Now Moses, going thus into contact with God, seems to have transferred to himself a portion of God's glory. And there is something very remarkable in this, that almost every portion of Scripture represents the moral glory of God to have a physical and material splendour that compensates for, by overwhelming, the very light of noonday itself. You remember in the picture of the New Jerusalem that it says, "There was no need of the sun nor of the moon,"—not that they were extinguished, but there was no need of them. Why? Because "the glory of God and of the Lamb were the light thereof;" as if that moral glory had a material splendour, the intensity of which should put out the very sun, and moon, and stars, by substituting and rendering them unnecessary. So the glory of God that shone between the cherubim shed in the darkness of the holy of holies an un-

earthly, but an unmistakeable splendour. So again Moses, in contact with—what? In contact with God's goodness—for it is said, God's goodness was his glory—in contact with God's goodness, carried off upon his countenance a portion of material splendour so brilliant that the children of Israel as they looked upon it wondered and were afraid. And we find, too, another illustration of this very same thing in the Acts of the Apostles, where we are told that Peter and John were preaching to the crowd that there is salvation in none other but Christ Jesus—in other words, they were setting forth God's richest goodness to the very Jews that had crucified the Lord of glory. It is said, "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." John, you will notice, (Acts iv.) did not speak one word; but stood by, backing Peter by his presence; but, as far as eloquent expression was concerned, Peter alone was the spokesman and the preacher. But the Jews took notice that the silent John, as well as the eloquent Peter, had been with Jesus—as if the countenance of the one sustained the preaching of the other, and both had caught a portion of the glory, by contact and communion with that God whose goodness and salvation they so strikingly displayed. And may not this glory now, if not rest upon the countenance, at least from the heart reflect upon the countenance that peace which is unmistakeable and full of glory? Just as a lamp, in the midst of a crystal urn, will send its beams through every portion of the vessel in

which it is inclosed, so a heart at peace with God, in close and intimate communion with him, will radiate its influence over the whole material economy, and the world itself will take notice that you have been with Jesus. Socrates believed of old, and there is some truth in it, that the countenance is the exact exponent of the mind within; that what a dial is to the machinery of a clock, a face is to the machinery—the moral machinery—that is within. And you will notice, let it be the ugliest, or, to use a less offensive expression, the plainest face in Christendom—let that countenance be lighted up from within with intellect and love and the peace of God, it shines perfectly beautiful. A face that has all the beauty of a statue, whether in man or woman, is utterly worthless. Such beauty has no charm at all; but a face that has not one feature symmetrical, but is illuminated by the love and light of the religion that is in the heart within, becomes, to my apprehension and to my taste, perfectly beautiful, and the evidence and the index before God and man of the peace that passeth understanding, the joy that a stranger cannot intermeddle with, bathing in its unearthly splendour the countenance that is its just and its natural exponent.

When Moses came down from the mount, after his contact with the glory of God, “he wist not that the skin of his face shone.” The Jews saw it; but Moses himself, in the old Saxon phrase, “wist not,” that is, he was not aware, did not know that his face shone with splendour. And is there not here a very suggestive lesson for us? They that have the most grace are not least conscious of it, but they are most humble because they are conscious of it. A Christian

feels that he ought to be humbled for his sins because they are his own ; and that he ought to be humbled for his graces, because they are not his own. And hence you will find that they who have grown most in grace, have gained most richly of the glory and the goodness of God by contact and communion with him, will themselves least be exalted or puffed up by the knowledge of what they have. Abraham said, " I am dust and ashes ;" Job said, " When I saw God I abhorred myself ;" Isaiah said, " Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips ; for mine eyes have seen the Lord of hosts ;" Paul also said, " I am less than the least of all saints ;" and John said, " When I saw him I fell at his feet as dead ;" teaching us that when we see ourselves in the intense light of the glory of God, however thankful for his apocalypse of himself to us, we are humbled by a sense of what we are in ourselves. And therefore it is beautifully said that Moses wist not—he did not think, he did not recollect this glory ; he was so thinking of his own unworthiness that he could scarcely venture to think of the worthiness with which God had clothed him.

Yet it is singular enough, in the next place, that when the Israelites saw the glory on his face, and informed him of it, they themselves were afraid. Now how can one account for this ? One would have thought, surely they would have hailed with delight a flower from the garden of Paradise itself ; surely they will welcome with hosannas a sunbeam from the Sun of Righteousness himself ; surely a leaf brought by Moses from the Tree of Life will be more precious to them than the olive branch brought

by the dove to the ark of Noah ; but it was not so. And yet they are not singular in this. Adam and Eve, you remember, hid themselves when they heard the footfall of God in the silence of evening twilight ; and, in the language of Scripture, “ they were afraid.” The disciples in the storm, when Jesus walked upon the waves as if they had been plain, were afraid, as if they had seen a spirit. Why is this—that heavenly and eternal future things make mortal man afraid ? Why is it that a man that can brave the bayonet of the foe, or march up in the “ forlorn hope ” in the face of a park of cannon, shrinks and starts back when he is brought into contact with the immortal, the eternal, the Divine ? How do you account for this ? There is a very simple, though it is to us a very painful, solution : it is, sin in the conscience. The worst man knows well that sin and God are infinite, eternal enemies, and that sin must be extirpated or God dethroned. The fear of the supernatural, the shrinking from God, is just the effect of guilt in the conscience, which often mutters, in its under-tone, what it cannot believe, “ No God.” The Israelites, had just sinned—they had made a golden calf, given worship to it instead of the living and the true God ; and, owing to conscious sin, the least manifestation of Deity made them tremble. There is in every conscience the recollection of sin—it may be, forgiven in the sanctuary above, but not forgotten nor forgiven by themselves. Decisive evidence of a state of grace is the absence of terror of God. All man’s shrinking from the future, the eternal, the supernatural, is the consciousness that

all is not right between the individual heart and God : but when we can go into the presence of God ; when we can stand upon the brink of eternity, and look down its tremendous steeps without fear or alarm ; when we can look up to the judgment-seat, and see reflected from afar its unearthly splendour, and yet feel peace—not because of sinlessness, for that no one feels, or insensibility, which a Christian has not ; but because of sin forgiven, for that every one may have—there is the greatest proof that we are at peace with God, and God at peace with us. The best test of character is, how you feel when you are brought into contact with God, with eternity, with the future—with the truly and the really supernatural. Men can play with the sham supernatural—they can play “fantastic tricks before high heaven” with what they call the supernatural, and profess to bring back the spirits of the dead to hold converse with them, by what is called “spirit-rapping,” a vulgar and bungling imposture. If Satan were in it, he would acquit himself with much more talent. It is too stupid to be his ; it is a delusion with some, a deception on others, and imposture by many who have a consciousness of the supernatural that they cannot quench, but whose consciences will not let them draw near to the holy supernatural, which is the presence of the true and the living God. When one can draw near to God, and hold communion with him, and feel peace, there is the evidence, not of sinlessness, which none of us have, but of sin-forgiveness, which is the birthright and the privilege of all that will.

Moses, when he saw the terror and alarm of the

children of Israel, did—what, indeed, veiled the impressiveness of his own appearance in the midst of them, but was to them an encouragement to draw near, and hear from his lips the wonderful words of eternal truth ;—he put, it is said, a “ vail ”—a piece of gauze—on his face, to dim the sheen of the glory that shone from his countenance, that the children of Israel might look upon the supernatural which was there, and yet not be afraid. They were not in that state that they could look upon such a manifestation of God without terror and alarm. Now the Apostle says, in the passage which I have read from the Epistle to the Corinthians, and which is the just and beautiful commentary upon the whole of this incident, that the Jews still see Christ through a vail ; that is, the whole Old Testament dispensation of the Gospel is seen by the Jews dimly, darkly, and obscurely, as through a vail. Every doctrine is seen through a type ; every sacrifice is revealed under a symbol, as a mirror of the sanctuary ; every hope is embosomed in a promise ; every restoration nestles in the midst of a prophecy. The Jew—the spiritual Jew, for he is not a Jew who is one outwardly—sees the vail, catches some stray beams of the inner glory that are stricken through, but he cannot behold in all his naked splendour Him who is the end and the substance of all—Jesus Christ, the brightness of the Father’s glory and the express image of his person. The Jew, in the synagogue, sees the high priest still stand in the holy of holies, and gaze upon the glory between the cherubim, and bear upon his breastplate, engraved on sparkling gems, the names of the tribes of Jacob ; but he cannot see the True

High Priest, who has entered into the true holy place, and, amid the glory of the inner sanctuary, is making intercession for his people. The Jew can see the passover lamb; he can read its history, he can regret that he is not restored to the only place where he can offer it—Jerusalem and its temple; but he cannot see through the veil the true and the only Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. They have not the light of the Sun of Righteousness shining on them. And it looked to me a melancholy thing, when one evening I went into their synagogue, and worshipped with them—for they sang some precious Psalms, and there was something beautiful in joining with a child of Israel in those divine hymns which are to us performances, but, alas! to his ear are only prophecies—it was melancholy to see inscribed over the porch of that synagogue a prayer, that God would send the Messiah to Israel; and one could not but breathe the prayer that their eyes might be opened, and that they might hear from his own Divine lips the words that he uttered to one of old, “I that speak unto thee am he.” But their longing will soon be gratified; their land is making ready for their return; the Crescent wanes, the great river Euphrates is exhausting itself by its immense warlike contributions every day; and by-and-by, when exhausted, along the dried channels of the stream which is the Crescent’s apocalyptic symbol, God’s ancient tribes shall move to the land of their fathers, the land that is dear to them, and ineffaceable from their hearts; and there they will see, no more through the veil, but face to face they shall see the glory on the countenance, not of Moses,

but of Jesus, and, whilst they look, they shall live for ever and for ever. When they shall turn to the Lord, says the Apostle, the vail shall be taken away.

But we must not forget, at the same time, that every unconverted man—and the Apostle teaches us this distinctly in this passage—has this vail upon his face. And again, in another passage, he says, “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; they are foolishness to him.” You yourselves know that, before you understood what the Gospel is, you used to read the Bible because it was a decent thing, or because there was very beautiful poetry in it—and there is poetry in this volume compared with which all the poetry of this world is insignificant ; or you read the Bible because it had instructive history in it : but the vail was on your heart. Now the vail has been taken away, and you can see an adaptation, and a glory, and an excellence, in this Book, that is to you the absolute demonstration that the vail has been taken away. I know not a more triumphant proof of the divinity and inspiration of this Book than this,—that the longer I study it the more it becomes new. There are some books that I have, and that I very often read—some of the old classics, and some of the modern poets. I read them with great pleasure, and return to them again and again ; but at length they begin to be uninteresting : I seem to have exhausted everything that is in them. But I find that the longer I read this Book, the more of novelty I find ; not new doctrines, but old ones in new lights ; the more I become acquainted with it, the more of the live glory seems to leap forth from its sacred

pages ; till in my mind there is no one thing in God's universe so absolutely certain as that this Book was never written or conceived by man, but inspired and taught by the Holy Spirit of God.

We read, in the next place, that the Apostle, having described the Jew with the veil upon his face, or the Gentile, equally blind, describes next the Christian. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." It represents a man looking into a mirror, from which some of the heavenly splendour is reflected ; the rays of the light that shine from the mirror irradiate the countenance of him that looks from a distance ; and looking into it he is transformed by its glory more and more into the likeness of the original that is there. We learn, from this idea of the Apostle, that Christians are very much made by what they come into contact with. I read somewhere of a very illustrious painter who never would gaze at an ugly or an imperfect painting for a single moment, lest it should exercise a deteriorating influence upon his own beautiful conceptions. I think there was truth in that ; that which we look at oftenest transfers itself, in a manner, to us. There seems to be a moral daguerreotype or calotype process as well as a mechanical and a material one ; as if the moral character we most constantly contemplate, and are brought most continually into contact with, exercised upon us its own peculiar character. The man who is always making money—the miser—you can see that he has been in contact with money, and with nothing else. Notice the man, again, who

has been in contact with the grand scenes of creation, he gives evidence of it by the expansion of his countenance. Everybody knows that what we are brought most frequently into contact with, does exercise upon the countenance as well as upon the affections, the sympathies, and the passions, a very distinct influence. And, if this be so, how important that we should be as much as possible in contact with all that ennobles, elevates, sanctifies, adorns! When you come into contact with something very grand—something like sublimity; if for instance, with the majestic ocean, when it rolls its waves to the strand against which it beats, you are so struck with the sublimity of the scene that you can not think of any of the poor and paltry transactions of this present world. If you are brought into the presence of vast mountain scenery, you are so elevated by its grandeur that all little and paltry recollections are dissolved and disappear. So when you come into contact with the great, the infinite, the glorious God, and drink deeply into his spirit, and catch upon your soul a portion of his glory, you are moulded silently, but surely, into his likeness; earthly cares, and earthly thoughts, and earthly anxieties, are lost and forgotten; and you can only think—what you feel so profoundly—of the brightness, and magnificence, and glory of the Being to whom you are brought near. And thus, beholding in God's Word, as in a glass, the glory of God in the countenance of Jesus Christ, you are transformed progressively from glory to glory, from strength to strength, till at last you appear before God in Zion.

And lastly, even this is not done by the Word alone, but the Spirit also; as if the most effective mirror—God's Word—reflecting most purely Christ's glory, were not enough to transform us without its application by the Spirit of God. The word of God will be the savour of death, except the Spirit, promised to every one that asks, is pleased to make it the savour of life.

May God make these truths with which we have been brought into contact, in the study of this Book, as rays of his glory, transforming us from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. Amen.

Love the Lord, and thou shalt see him,
Do his will, and thou shalt know
How the Spirit lights the letter,
How a little child may go
Where the wise and prudent stumble;
How a heavenly glory shines,
In his acts of love and mercy,
From the Gospel's simplest lines.

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